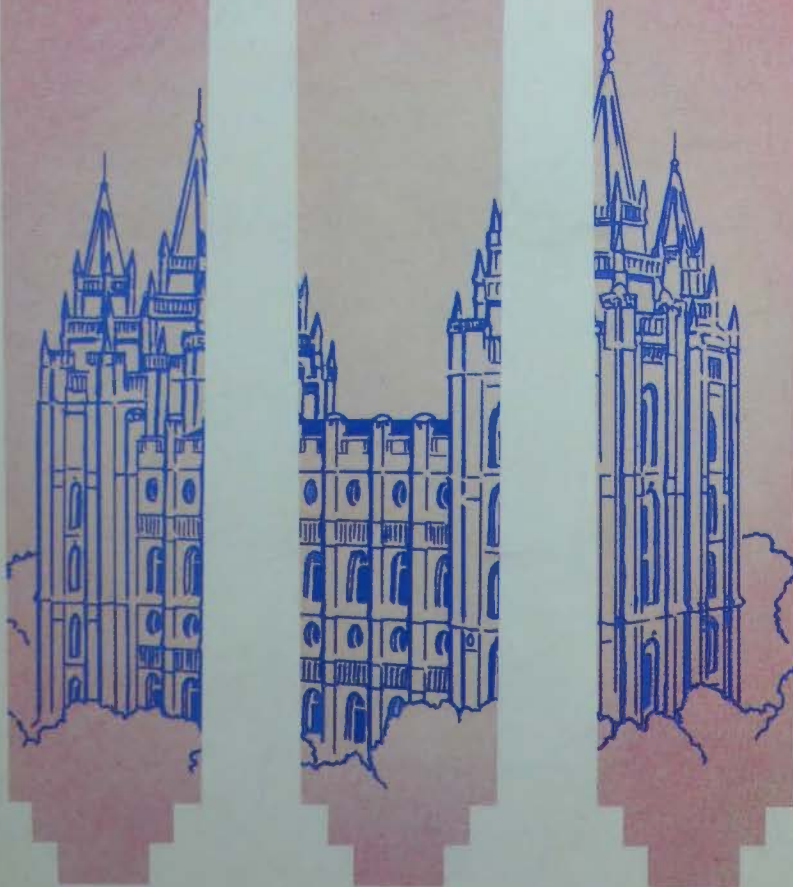


PILLARS OF MORMONISM

Douglas V. Pond

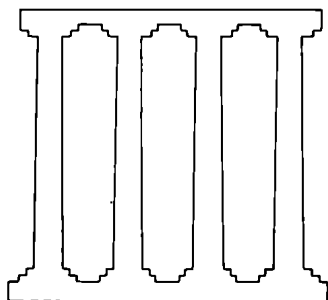




Douglas V. Pond, who has studied Mormonism for some five decades, has good reason for his interest and concern in that subject shown in this book. He was born in the bosom of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and is a great-grandson of two of the original twelve apostles of Mormonism. As such, his overriding need was to *know* whether the doctrines of that communion of which he was a part are truth.

In *Pillars of Mormonism*, Mr. Pond examines those teachings in a gracious manner, then frankly but kindly explains why he was not able to continue subscribing to them. The result is a volume that will be helpful to all who desire to understand the teachings of the Mormon Church as compared with the Bible.

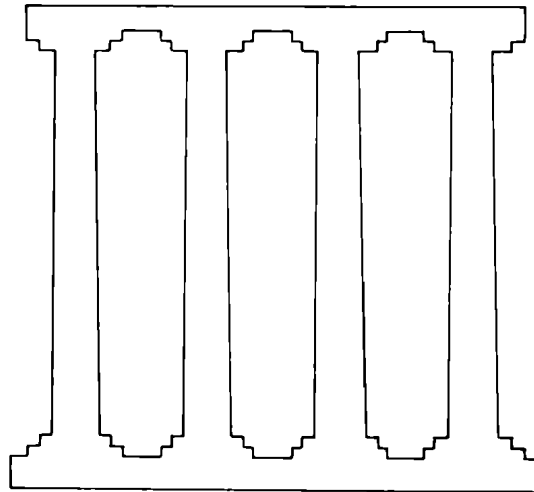
A Seventh-day Adventist minister, Elder Pond has spent the past thirty years with the religious radiobroadcasting organization the Voice of Prophecy. Prior to that he spent some years in mission service and in various ministerial capacities in the United States. He presently lives in southern California.



PILLARS OF MORMONISM

by Douglas V. Pond

A Kindly Review of Mormonism
in a Careful Comparison
With the Bible



Review and Herald Publishing Association
Washington, D.C.

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Review and Herald Publishing Association
Printed in U.S.A.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Pond, Douglas V., 1908-
Pillars of Mormonism.

Bibliography: p.

1. Mormons and Mormonism—Doctrinal and controversial
works. I. Title.

BX8645.P66 230'.9'3 78-1380

Editor: Thomas A. Davis
Cover and Book Design: Dean Tucker

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Words are inadequate to express my appreciation to all who, through the years, played an important part in the preparation of this volume. Many secretaries have willingly typed the manuscript, valuable suggestions have been made by editors and copy editors, and urgent requests for the book have been made by many people in North America and in other lands, which has been an encouragement to me to complete this work. Because those to whom I owe a debt of gratitude are too many to name, and for fear of missing some, I include them all in this expression of warmest thanks.

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I also wish to express sincere appreciation to all LDS Church publishers for kindly granting permission to quote from their publications.

The Author.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS BOOK

Gen.—Genesis
Ex.—Exodus
Lev.—Leviticus
Deut.—Deuteronomy
Ps.—Psalms
Eccl.—Ecclesiastes
Isa.—Isaiah
Jer.—Jeremiah
Eze.—Ezekiel
Dan.—Daniel
Zech.—Zechariah
Mal.—Malachi
Matt.—Matthew

Rom.—Romans
1 Cor.—1 Corinthians
2 Cor.—2 Corinthians
Gal.—Galatians
Eph.—Ephesians
Phil.—Philippians
Col.—Colossians
1 Thess.—1 Thessalonians
2 Thess.—2 Thessalonians
1 Tim.—1 Timothy
2 Tim.—2 Timothy
Heb.—Hebrews
Rev.—Revelation

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FOREWORD

This book needed to be written. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly called the Mormon Church, is rapidly increasing its influence in the world. Along with its noticeable buildup in membership, the important contribution made by many of its members in governmental and other important fields draws attention to its history and doctrines. Moreover, Mormon doctrines have been newly set before the world during recent years in books produced by authorities of the church. The claims of this organization, including that of being the only true and authoritative religious movement on earth today, make reasonable a candid and kindly consideration of those claims.

This book is such a response, and the friendly spirit of the author reveals the love he still holds for his former fellow believers in the Mormon Church. This volume will be found to be especially valuable because of the large amount of official material found in authentic quotations from authoritative LDS works. The material in this book will be helpful to all who desire an up-to-date examination of this important religious movement.

H. M. S. RICHARDS, *Speaker Emeritus*
The Voice of Prophecy Radio Broadcast.

PREFACE

Among the Mormon people are a large number of my relatives, whom I am eager to see among those who “are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb,” at the return of the Lord. For their sake, and for the sake of all who may possibly be helped, I have made this comparative study of the major teachings of Mormonism and the Bible, and in some cases have compared statement with statement in major works of Mormonism itself.

During the 1950’s and 1960’s—when most of the volumes of the Joseph Fielding Smith library, as it is sometimes called, were compiled—I had the opportunity of making a full reinvestigation of the Mormon teachings by a careful reading and search through these and other volumes. This solemn restudy has created in me an unremitting sense of duty to share what I found with others. This made it imperative that Mormonism’s teachings be set side by side with the Bible for comparison, which I have done in this volume.

I wish to make clear that I did not give up my membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, better known as the Mormon Church—the church into which I was born, the church of my parents, grandparents, and my great-grandparents—for any of

the following reasons:

1. A desire to leave the LDS Church. To leave it was one of the most difficult decisions I have ever had to make.

2. Animosity toward any LDS leader or member.

3. Sympathy with any LDS "offshoot," which, because of some complaint or disagreement, has pulled away from the church. My wife and I have never been members of any such group.

4. A request that I leave the church, for any reason whatever. In fact, I found it rather difficult to get the church to release my wife and me from membership. Others have had the same experience.

Through an investigation of the Bible we discovered an inexhaustible mine of truth. We then knew we had a choice to make, and our decision was to hold to the Bible as the ultimate test of all true doctrine.

In our separation from the Mormon Church, then, we harbored no disgruntled attitude toward it or its people, but only feelings of love and solicitude for our relatives, for the leaders, and for all members of the church.

Two challenges strongly influenced me to prepare this volume. The first resulted from a visit to the Mormon temple in Los Angeles, California, prior to its dedication in March, 1956. Among the LDS literature there displayed were current volumes from the pen of Joseph Fielding Smith, then president of the Council of the Twelve and subsequently president of the church. He is acknowledged to be Mormonism's chief doctrinal authority. This was a new opportunity to obtain and read authoritative, mid-twentieth-century statements on Mormon doctrinal beliefs.

The second challenge was a statement found in one of the purchased volumes from the pen of Apostle Orson Pratt, father of my grandmother Lathilla Pratt

Kimball. With a constant prayer in my heart I have devoted much of my spare time to preparing this report of my findings to be "published to the world," as suggested by Orson Pratt in the following words:

"The *Book of Mormon* claims to be a divinely inspired record, written by a succession of prophets who inhabited ancient America. It professes to be revealed to the present generation for the salvation of all who will receive it, and for the overthrow and damnation of all nations who reject it.

"This book must be either *true* or *false*. [Italics his.] If true, it is one of the most important messages ever sent from God to man, affecting both the temporal and eternal interests of every people under heaven to the same extent and in the same degree that the message of Noah affected the inhabitants of the old world. If false, it is one of the most cunning, wicked, bold, deep-laid impositions ever palmed upon the world, calculated to deceive and ruin millions who will sincerely receive it as the word of God, and will suppose themselves securely built upon the rock of truth until they are plunged with their families into hopeless despair.

"The nature of the message in the *Book of Mormon* is such, that if true, no one can possibly be saved and reject it; if false, no one can possibly be saved and receive it. Therefore, every soul in all the world is equally interested in ascertaining its truth or falsity. In a matter of such infinite importance no person should rest satisfied with the conjectures or opinions of others: he should use every exertion himself to become acquainted with the nature of the message: he should carefully examine the evidences of which it is offered to the world: he should, with all patience and perseverance, seek to acquire a certain knowledge whether it be of God or not. Without such an investigation in the most careful, candid, and impartial manner, he cannot safely

judge without greatly hazarding his future and eternal welfare.

“If, after a rigid examination, it be found an imposition, it should be extensively published to the world as such; the evidences and arguments upon which the imposture was detected, should be clearly and logically stated, that those who have been sincerely yet unfortunately deceived, may perceive the nature of the deception, and be reclaimed, and that those who continue to publish the delusion, may be exposed and silenced, not by physical force, neither by persecutions, bare assertions, nor ridicule, but by strong and powerful arguments—by evidences adduced from scripture and reason. Such, and such only, should be the weapons employed to detect and overthrow false doctrines—to reclaim mankind from their errors—to expose religious enthusiasm—and put to silence base and wicked impostors.

*“But on the other hand, if investigation should prove the *Book of Mormon* true and of divine origin, then the importance of the message is so great, and the consequences of receiving or rejecting it so overwhelming, that the various nations—to whom it is now sent, and in whose languages it is now published, should speedily repent of all their sins, and renounce all the wicked traditions of their fathers, as they are imperatively commanded to do in the message: they should utterly reject both the Popish and Protestant ministry, together with all the churches which have been built up by them or that have sprung from them, as being entirely destitute of authority; they should turn away from all the priestcrafts and abominations practiced by these apostate churches (falsely called Christian), and bring forth fruits meet for repentance in all things: they should be immersed in water by one having authority, and receive a remission of their sins, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. After thus being baptized into the*

kingdom of God, they should seek to translate the *Book of Mormon*, into every written language of the earth, and send it forth by millions of copies to every nation, and not cease their exertions until all people have heard the glad tidings. Every synagogue, church, and place of public worship should be thrown open to the servants of God. Presidents, governors, and rulers—kings, lords, and nobles, and all in authority should set the example before the mass of the people, by receiving with all meekness and humility this great revelation of modern times. Every periodical throughout their dominions should devote its columns to disseminating, far and near, among all classes, the evidences, arguments, and reasons, which establish the divine authenticity of so great and important a work. These are some of the present duties of both the American and European nations *if this message be true.*”—Orson Pratt, *Orson Pratt's Works*, pp. 107-109. (Italics supplied.)

I agree that if the *Book of Mormon*, and all that Mormonism embraces, is “true and of divine origin,” it should be shared with the world in “every written language of the earth.” To this, I believe, every genuine follower of Christ would agree. For truth given us by Christ is to be “preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations” (Matt. 24:14), and He says that those who are thus reached are to be taught “to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (chap. 28:20). However, if the *Book of Mormon* is found not to be truth sent from God, then “every periodical” in every nation should open its columns to reveal that it is not of God; that it is not sound doctrine; that it is not the glorious gospel, but a counterfeit.

And let us understand this: If Mormonism is God's message to the world for today, *then there is no other true body of Christ on the earth*, for the LDS Church holds doctrines that are not found in the tenets of faith held

by any other church. These singular LDS teachings include baptism for the dead, the preexistent spirits of men, and the claim that the gospel was taken from the earth and later restored through Joseph Smith.

However, if these teachings peculiar to Mormonism—and other beliefs held in common by Mormons and some others, which we shall examine carefully—are found to be unreasonable, illogical, and untenable, and in disagreement with the Bible, then unashamedly, earnestly, and without fear, we shall urge all who hold these LDS teachings to give them up. We shall urge that from the very day of such a discovery they place their hope in the Book of books, the Holy Bible!

It is the privilege of each individual who reads these pages to make his or her own decision, as one who must someday give an account to God.

That the Spirit of Christ may truly foster the love of God in the mind and heart of all who read this book and open up to each one a full understanding and acceptance of all that is truth in Christ is the heartfelt prayer of its author.

D.V.P.

Chapter 1

MORMONISM TODAY— AN OVERVIEW

When and where did Mormonism begin? It was in 1820, Joseph Smith's fifteenth year, that he experienced his first vision. Of this he afterward wrote: "I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other—'*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*'"—*The Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith 2:17.

Declaring that because there was great religious excitement among the people and religious bodies of his day, young Joseph decided to "ask of God" (James 1:5) which church was right and the one he should join. According to his account, one of the two personages answered that he "must join none of them, for they were all wrong" (*ibid.*, verse 19).

Three years later, on September 21, 1823, according to Joseph Smith, the angel Moroni first appeared to him. It was Moroni who, Joseph Smith declared, made known to him the book, "written upon gold plates," which would give "an account of the former inhabitants of this [the American] continent"; also that "the everlasting Gospel was contained in it [the book], as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants." Deposited with the plates, he reported, were "two stones in silver

bows . . . fastened to a breastplate,” constituting “the Urim and Thummim,” given for “the purpose of translating the book” (*ibid.*, verses 33-35).

It is related that after four consecutive annual visits to the west side of the hill Cumorah in the vicinity of Manchester, Ontario County, New York, the angel Moroni delivered the gold plates of the *Book of Mormon* into Joseph Smith’s hands on September 22, 1827. We are told that with the aid of the “Urim and Thummim” Joseph Smith completed the translation of the golden plates, and early in 1830 the *Book of Mormon* was printed and published in the English language. Prior to this an angel showed the plates of the *Book of Mormon* to the “Three Witnesses”—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. Shortly afterward Joseph Smith showed the plates to the “Eight Witnesses” (see *Essentials in Church History* [1974 ed. revised], pp. 64-66).

This is a thumbnail account of the beginning of the church organization totally unique in itself, and unmatched in all the annals of church history; a church body dedicated to a long list of priorities rarely demanded of any people since the dawn of human history.

The Mormons are a people welded together by the sufferings and persecutions of the past, the activities and duties of the present, and the hopes and promised rewards of the future. They are involved in living in this life while at the same time preparing for a life to come. This is as it should be.

They are a people successfully enmeshed in the affairs of the business, political, financial, and educational world of today. Not a few of the LDS Church authorities have been successful businessmen, as well as attorneys, educators, and writers. Many have made their mark as bankers, executives, public servants, farmers, and chairmen and directors of large church-owned corporations and other business enterprises.

Harold B. Lee and Spencer W. Kimball, eleventh and twelfth LDS prophets and presidents of the church, respectively, are to be listed among these.

Political leadership in government has, perhaps, been even more memorable. Ezra Taft Benson, president of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, was Secretary of Agriculture during the Eisenhower administration. David M. Kennedy was United States Secretary of the Treasury. Frank E. Moss served in the United States Senate, as did Wallace F. Bennett, who was also at one time president of the National Association of Manufacturers. Congressman Morris K. Udall, of Arizona, is a Mormon. Many others could be mentioned.

It is not uncommon for LDS members both to have held political office and to have reached high positions in the world of business. One example, George W. Romney, was governor of Michigan and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and he also served both as board chairman and as president of American Motors.

Perhaps one of the church's most widely known members in the financial world was Marriner S. Eccles, a man who rose from obscurity in a small northern Utah community to international fame as a financial expert. He was one of Utah's greatest industrial builders, and served as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board during the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In the educational field, G. Homer Durham is internationally known, serving as a member of the National Association of State Universities, as president of Arizona State University from 1960 to 1969, and as Utah Commissioner of Higher Education from 1969 to 1976.

In the sports and entertainment fields are other well-known members of the LDS Church, such as Johnny Miller and Billy Casper, golfers; Harmon Killebrew, former major league baseball player; the Osmond

brothers and their sister, Marie; the King Sisters; Laraine Day, actress; and others.

Perhaps the church's most enduring public-relations feature through many decades has been the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, of Salt Lake City, which brings responses of appreciation from people all over the world.

Salt Lake City, with its nearly 200,000 population, its wide streets, its 28-story church office building, which houses the headquarters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is situated in a large bowl at an elevation of about 4,300 feet. Approximately two thirds of Salt Lake City's population, and 70 percent of the population of the State of Utah, is Mormon.

As reported in the Los Angeles *Times* of Saturday, October 11, 1975, the wealth of the Mormon Church is estimated in the "billions of dollars." "Tithes, other contributions, and business income totaling more than \$1 billion a year flow into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the corporations it controls, an Associated Press study indicates. The 3.4-million-member church [3,750,000 in 1977] has business interests more extensive than those of any other church in the United States. Its holdings rank it among the nation's top 50 corporations in total assets."

Some of Mormonism's doctrines are indisputably unique. No other church holds them. Some of these are the teaching that the gospel was taken from the earth and restored through Joseph Smith, baptism for the dead, the belief in preexisting spirits, and the exaltation of man to godhood.

The teaching of baptism for the dead has created an enormous system of research into the records of those who have lived in the past. The church feels duty-bound to carry on this extremely costly project. Robert E. Peterson, who manages the Temple Services Division of the church's Genealogical Society, stated, as reported in

the Los Angeles *Times* of September 29, 1976: “We believe . . . that a person cannot gain eternal salvation unless he is baptized by the Mormon Church. There are uncounted millions who have walked the earth and have never had the opportunity to be baptized by the church.

“When those in the hereafter, in the spirit world, are baptized by proxy, they are free to accept or reject the baptism, and thereby accept or reject eternal salvation.

. . .

“To provide the necessary names, camera crews are working around the world, 13 of them in this country and 67 others in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Central and South America. They are filming records in museums, courthouses, and other places. They are filming church registers, land grants, property deeds, probate records, marriage records, census returns, wills, tax and pension files, naturalization records, and the passenger lists of ships. . . .

“Several hundred million names and vital records have been put on microfilm. Rolls of film are shipped daily to Salt Lake City from throughout the world. Negatives of the film are stored in steel cabinets in six huge rooms chiseled out of a granite mountain in the Rockies.

“So far, 1,050,000 rolls of microfilm have been deposited in the mountain—a photo record equivalent to a library of more than 5 million books of 300 pages each—1.5 billion pages of worldwide vital records dating back to the 1400’s, when such record-keeping began.

“As an indication of the importance attached to the project, 20 percent of the floor space in the church’s new 28-story headquarters building is given over to the Genealogical Society.”

The LDS Church is to be heartily commended for its constant development of a close family life among its

members. One of its successful practices is Family Night, Monday evening of each week, when each family endeavors to drop everything and spend the evening together, as a family, in the discussion of religious topics, social themes, family projects, and perhaps even the family budget.

A mission outreach presently involves not less than 25,000 youthful missionaries in a two-by-two home-visitation-and-preaching program. These missionaries are sent to the various States of the United States, to Canada, and to many nations across the seas. A major missionary program has been developed in later years throughout Central and South America. This outreach touches some 70 nations around the world.

The Salt Lake Temple on Temple Square is one of sixteen now completed temples, most of which are located in the United States and Canada. Others are under construction or being planned, according to church President Spencer W. Kimball. Church members are called upon to diligently research their own personal histories and genealogies that they may carry out the required ordinances in the temple, such as proxy baptism for the dead. In order for a couple to be married "for time [this life] and for all eternity" the marriage must be consummated within temple walls. A civil marriage is recognized by the LDS Church, but does not meet the specifications as outlined above.

At the recent General Conference session, held in April, 1977, Council of the Twelve president Ezra Taft Benson strongly urged members everywhere not to accept unearned welfare assistance from local or national agencies and, if able, to "work for what they receive," for "government dole is character weakening." This stand is commendable and is pointedly confirmed by the apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 3:10: "This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither

should he eat.” President Benson urged members to accept the church welfare program and earn through the program that which they need, and “by doing so, the members will be spiritually strengthened, and they will maintain their dignity and self-respect.”

We would have a healthier, happier, and more joyful world today if much that is enjoined in Mormonism’s “Word of Wisdom” were followed among the church’s own membership and the world as a whole. Recommended to all are “wholesome herbs” and “every fruit in the season.” Total abstinence is admonished in things harmful to the body, such as wine, strong drink, narcotics, tobacco in any form, and hot drinks such as tea and coffee. Even when one uses meat it is recommended to be “used sparingly” and “only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine.” (See *Doctrine and Covenants*, section 89.) As a consequence the LDS Church membership, as a people, has a lower death rate from lung and other types of cancer, and cardiovascular diseases of the heart, than the general public.

The church spends multiplied thousands of dollars for teaching tools to train their children and youth against the use of mind- and body-destroying substances.

A tithe, or one tenth of each member’s income above business expenses, is required of the membership. These tithe funds are used in many different ways for the expansion of the overall church program.

From personal experience, I can say that it would be most difficult to find a more friendly and hospitable people than those known across the United States, Canada, and other parts of the world as the Mormons.

Chapter 2

WHAT IS MORMON SCRIPTURE?

What are the sources of Mormon beliefs? What part does the Bible play in the teachings of this church? Is it *the* source of LDS doctrine? These questions will be answered from major LDS books, some of which are the *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, *The Pearl of Great Price*, the Joseph Fielding Smith library, *Orson Pratt's Works*, *Brigham Young's Discourses*, and *The Articles of Faith*, by James E. Talmage. The books here named are the main foundational sources of LDS doctrine, and we shall better understand their relationship and teachings as we refer to them. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has many other writers besides those named above, and they all, of course, quote the Bible.

At this point let us become better acquainted with Joseph Fielding Smith, already mentioned, who was ordained an apostle in 1910, became president of the Twelve Apostles in 1951, president-prophet of the LDS Church in 1970, and without doubt was, before his death in 1972, its most prolific modern writer. Either on the cover flap or in the Preface of his *Doctrines of Salvation*, in three volumes (copyrighted 1954, 1955, and 1956, respectively), this statement appears: "Joseph Fielding Smith, a prophet and an apostle of Jesus Christ

... , is honored throughout the whole [LDS] Church for his unbending devotion to the revealed word of God.

“In the councils of his brethren, his counsel has long been sought and respected. His teachings are the *Doctrines of Salvation as they have been made known by revelation. He is universally esteemed as the chief doctrinal authority of the Church.*” (Italics supplied.)

Surely we could quote no higher authority than “the chief doctrinal authority of the Church.” We shall therefore often turn to his writings for the accepted modern teachings of our friends the Mormons.

I never met President Smith, as I have other leaders and former leaders of the church, but I know that his writings make a strong appeal to all for a high standard of Christian living. Even when disagreeing with his expressed written beliefs, one cannot fail to appreciate his obvious sincerity.

Let us turn now to the place of the Bible in the teaching of the LDS Church. What does President Joseph Fielding Smith designate as “the scriptures”? In his book *Man: His Origin and Destiny*, page 276, he says, “You cannot be a faithful member and reject the scriptures—Bible, *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants* and *Pearl of Great Price*—for these are the standards of our faith.”

The *Book of Mormon* is the most widely known of all LDS literature. The following statement shows the LDS Church’s regard for this book. It was made by Richard L. Evans—former member of the Council of the Twelve and, until his death in 1971, the voice heard each week on the Tabernacle Choir broadcast over CBS—in the book *A Guide to the Religions of America*, pages 94 and 95. “The *Book of Mormon* is not the ‘Mormon Bible,’ as is sometimes supposed. It is one of the complementary works that the ‘Mormon’ accepts as scripture. The ‘Mormon’ does not believe that the revelations of God

were confined to ancient Israel. He does not believe that a loving Father would restrict His communication to one part of His family, to one time of history, or to one land. He believes 'all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and . . . that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God' (9th Article of Faith).

"The *Book of Mormon* is part of a record, both sacred and secular, of prophets and peoples who (with supplementary groups) were among the ancestors of the American 'Indians.' It covers principally the peoples of the period from about 600 B.C. to 421 A.D. These peoples were of Asiatic origin, of the House of Israel, and left Jerusalem during the reign of King Zedekiah, eventually to cross the sea to the Western world, where they built great cities and civilizations. Ultimately, they all but destroyed themselves in warring with one another.

"They brought with them certain records of the Old Testament. In addition, their historians, statesmen, and prophets kept records of important events of their own civilization, some of which were engraved on gold plates. It was from such plates '*preserved by the gift and power of God*' that Joseph Smith translated the *Book of Mormon* (first published in 1830).

"The book takes its title from a man whose name was Mormon, who was one of the later prophets of the thousand-year period, and who was not greatly different from the prophets of Old and New Testament times, except that he lived in the Western Hemisphere among some of the Savior's 'other sheep' (John 10:16). The *Book of Mormon* witnesses that Jesus the Christ visited the inhabitants of this hemisphere after His ascension." (Italics supplied.)

I possess a copy of the *Book of Mormon* presented to me personally by Heber J. Grant, president of the LDS

Church from 1918 until his death in 1945 at the age of 88. The president of the Mormon Church not only holds that office but, according to Mormon belief, is, in his own right, a “prophet, seer, and revelator,” and may receive revelations for the church, as Joseph Smith received revelations.

The account of Joseph Smith’s first vision is given by Joseph Fielding Smith in his book *The Restoration of All Things*, pages 30 to 32, under the heading “The Prophet’s Vision”:

“In the midst of religious confusion, with the world filled with sects and churches, some crying ‘Lo here is Christ!’ and others ‘Lo there,’ a youth sought the Lord in humble prayer desiring to know what he should do to be saved, for in the midst of all the confusion and conflicting doctrines, he knew not what to do. He declared that the result of this prayer was a glorious visitation in which appeared both the Father and the Son. In answer to his prayer he was told to join none of the existing churches for they were all wrong. . . . *This story is either true or else it is the greatest fraud. No middle ground is possible.* Joseph Smith did not imagine it.” (Italics supplied.)

At this point we repeat a thought or two from Apostle Orson Pratt, already quoted in the Preface:

“This book [of Mormon] must be either *true* or *false*. [Italics his.] If true, it is one of the most important messages ever sent from God to man, affecting both the temporal and eternal interests of every people under heaven to the same extent and in the same degree that the message of Noah affected the inhabitants of the old world. If false, it is one of the most cunning, wicked, bold, deep-laid impositions ever palmed upon the world, calculated to deceive and ruin millions who will sincerely receive it as the Word of God, and will suppose themselves securely built upon the rock of truth until

they are plunged with their families into hopeless despair.

“The nature of the message in the *Book of Mormon* is such that if true, no one can possibly be saved and reject it; if false, no one can possibly be saved and receive it. . . .

“If, after a rigid examination, it be found an imposition, it should be extensively published to the world as such; the evidences and arguments upon which the imposture was detected, should be clearly and logically stated, that those who have been sincerely yet unfortunately deceived, may perceive the nature of the deception, and be reclaimed, and that those who continue to publish the delusion, may be exposed and silenced, not by physical force, neither by persecutions, bare assertions, nor ridicule, but by strong and powerful arguments—by evidences adduced from scripture and reason. Such, and such only, should be the weapons employed to detect and overthrow false doctrines—to reclaim mankind from their errors—to expose religious enthusiasm—and put to silence base and wicked impostors.”—*Orson Pratt’s Works*, pp. 107, 108. (Italics supplied.)

I have made just such a “rigid examination” during the past four decades, and the time has now come when I must follow this counsel of my great-grandfather Orson Pratt. With God’s help the “evidence and arguments” shall be “clearly and logically stated,” from “scripture and reason.” No other means shall be employed.

In succeeding chapters we shall carefully compare Mormonism’s teachings and sources of doctrine with the Bible.

Contrary to common belief, most of the fundamental doctrines of the LDS Church are to be found not so much in the *Book of Mormon* but in the book *Doctrine and Covenants*. Though some basic doctrine is found in the *Book of Mormon* it is *Doctrine and Covenants* that contains

many “revelations” claimed by Joseph Smith (1805-1844), the founder and first prophet of the LDS Church, to have been given him by the God of heaven specifically for this latter-day church.

This thought seems to be upheld by President Joseph Fielding Smith: “*In my judgment there is no book on earth yet come to man as important as the book known as the Doctrine and Covenants, with all due respect to the Book of Mormon, and the Bible, and the Pearl of Great Price, which we say are our standards in doctrine. The book of Doctrine and Covenants to us stands in a peculiar position above them all.*”

“I am going to tell you why. When I say that, do not for a moment think I do not value the *Book of Mormon*, the *Bible*, and the *Pearl of Great Price*, just as much as any man that lives; I think I do. I do not know of anybody who has read them more, and I appreciate them; they are wonderful; they contain doctrine and revelation and commandments that we should heed; but the *Bible* is a history containing the doctrine and commandments given to the people anciently. That applies also to the *Book of Mormon*. It is the doctrine and the history and the commandments of the people who dwelt upon this continent anciently.

“But this *Doctrine and Covenants* contains the word of God to those who dwell here now. *It is our book. It belongs to the Latter-day Saints. More precious than gold, the Prophet says we should treasure it more than the riches of the whole earth.*”—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, pp. 198, 199.

The *Pearl of Great Price* consists of two small books, the Book of Moses, and the Book of Abraham. Of the latter, Joseph Fielding Smith states on page 154 of *Essentials in Church History*: Deseret Book Co., 27th ed., rev., 1974:

“The Book of Abraham—On the 3rd of July, 1835,

Michael H. Chandler came to Kirtland exhibiting four mummies and some rolls of papyrus covered with hieroglyphic figures. Mr. Chandler had been directed to the Prophet Joseph Smith as one who could translate the characters for him. At his request Joseph Smith gave a translation of a few of them which Mr. Chandler stated agreed with the decipherings of learned men who had examined them. He gave the Prophet a certificate to this effect. Shortly after this interview some of the Saints of Kirtland purchased the mummies and the manuscripts, and, with Oliver Cowdery and Wm. W. Phelps as scribes, the Prophet commenced to translate these records. To their great joy they discovered that one of these rolls contained writings of Abraham, or instructions given to him in Egypt from the Lord. The other contained writings of Joseph, son of Jacob. During the summer the Prophet prepared for the complete translation of the Book of Abraham, as it is called, which now appears in the *Pearl of Great Price*, one of the accepted standard works of the Church. . . . This Book of Abraham, like the Book of Moses, which also appears in the *Pearl of Great Price*, is another addition to our collection of lost scripture which the Lord, through his wisdom, has restored.” (Italics supplied.)

Thus far we have discussed the several books accepted as “scripture” by the Mormon people, who esteem them as being on an equality with the Bible. We have also presented Apostle Orson Pratt’s challenge as to whether the *Book of Mormon* is “true and of divine origin” or is “false” and a fatal deception to all who accept it.

At this point we list the thirteen Articles of Faith as they were drawn up by LDS Prophet Joseph Smith, and which outline the church’s creed. Note particularly the eighth.

“1. We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in

His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

“2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression.

“3. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

“4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

“5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands, by those who are in authority to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.

“6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, viz., apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc.

“7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.

“8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the *Book of Mormon* to be the word of God.

“9. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

“10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion will be built upon this [the American] continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

“11. We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship

how, where, or what they may.

“12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

“13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.”

Some of these articles of belief are commendable, but let us analyze the *eighth* article of faith: “We believe the Bible to be the word of God *as far as it is translated correctly*; we also believe the *Book of Mormon* to be the word of God.” (Italics supplied.)

Does the LDS Church still hold to its belief as stated in this eighth article of faith? Is this, even today, the church’s belief? Or is it just an “old-fashioned” teaching of the early Mormons? On page 349 of his volume *Man: His Origin and Destiny*, Joseph Fielding Smith declares:

“The creation was two-fold—first spiritual, secondly temporal. This truth, also, Moses [referring to Moses and to the book of Moses in the *Pearl of Great Price*] plainly taught—much more plainly than it has come down to us in the *imperfect translations of the Bible that are now in use*. Therein the fact of a spiritual creation, antedating the temporal creation, is strongly implied, but the proof of it is not so clear and conclusive as in other records *held by the Latter-day Saints to be of equal authority with the Jewish scriptures*.” (Italics supplied.)

It is clear from this statement by its chief authority on doctrine, that the LDS Church even today places the *Book of Mormon*, the *Doctrine and Covenants*, and *Pearl of Great Price* on an *equality with the Holy Bible*.

President Joseph Fielding Smith also says, “We are

all aware that there are errors in the *Bible* due to faulty translations and ignorance on the part of translators; but *the hand of the Lord has been over this volume of scripture nevertheless, and it is remarkable that it has come down to us in the excellent condition in which we find it.*”—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, p. 191.

Continuing the same paragraph Joseph Fielding Smith makes one of his most astounding statements: “Guided by the *Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants*, and the Spirit of the Lord, it is not difficult for one to discern the errors in the Bible.”—*Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

God’s Holy Book, the Bible, has for long centuries stood its ground against the greatest atheistic minds the world could produce. It has come off victorious against every foe. This Book of books has transformed unholy lives into the likeness of the glorious Saviour of the world. It has proved its divine origin through hundreds of fulfilled prophecies, which are often called the acid test of the divinity of the Bible. It is strange, indeed, that the entire world is asked at this late day to test the validity of the Bible by the *Book of Mormon* and *Doctrine and Covenants*, two books issued in the nineteenth century and currently held in honest question by a vast multitude of non-Mormons.

And to be seriously considered is Apostle Richard L. Evans’ statement, which we have already noted, that the “gold plates” were “preserved by the gift and power of God.” Now consider this for a moment: if God’s power could “preserve” the plates on which the record found in the *Book of Mormon* was inscribed, *why could not, and why did not, the same power in similar manner preserve God’s Book, the Bible, through the identical centuries?*

In what high esteem did the apostle Paul, who wrote fourteen of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, regard Holy Scripture! It was he who wrote, “From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures,

which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

Again Paul wrote, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (chap. 4:2). This instruction was penned for ministers of all time. And from what source was such doctrine to come? Of course, from the Bible, the Holy Scriptures.

The apostle Peter also wrote, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever*. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: *but the word of the Lord endureth for ever*. And this is the *word which by the gospel is preached unto you*" (1 Peter 1:22-25).

We quote further from Peter: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: *but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*" (2 Peter 1:19-21).

Jesus exalted all the Old Testament scriptures. As He walked with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, He said to them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were *written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me*” (Luke 24:25-27, 44).

Millions of Christ's followers, in every age and clime, have clasped to their breasts the mighty truths of this Holy Book, the Bible. Multitudes have borne their testimony by giving their lives rather than deny belief in it. I, for one, must hold to the Holy Scriptures, and to the truths they present; for I accept, without reservation, the Bible, which has placed in my heart a hope that no other book in the world has been able to provide, a hope on which I can depend in every time of stress, perplexity, or illness. The Bible is the Book in which I can entrust my whole being for the everlasting salvation it offers. It is the Book of *all* books, preserved and protected through the centuries by the King of kings, our Redeemer, Saviour, and Lord, its omniscient, omnipotent, and onnipresent Author. Neither evil men nor Satan and all his fallen angels have been able to change or destroy God's Book to such an extent that the honest in heart could not find in it the way of salvation. It is true that God's Book requires study, for “the things of the Spirit of God . . . are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). God never intended that the Bible should be read as one would read a storybook. Nevertheless, it was prepared in such a way that, regardless of education, all who will can find within its pages the love of God and the sacrifice of Christ for them personally.

Everything vital to man's “instruction in righteousness” and to his eternal salvation is contained in the Bible. It is our guidebook, our road map to life everlasting. *To it we must bring other books for the supreme test!*

What a book the Bible is! Written by forty men in different stations of life—fishermen, farmers, statesmen, doctors, ministers—over a period of 1,600 years, yet all woven together into a beautiful tapestry of truth. It has been preserved under the divine administration of our mighty God. It is His Book, and yet is is *my* Book, *your* Book—planned by God, inspired by God, and protected by God through the millenniums of time—for me and for you. Therefore, if we want to follow God safely, and finally to live with Him eternally, we must learn His plan of salvation from His Book.

Chapter 3

TESTING THE BOOK OF MORMON

Let us now consider the *Book of Mormon* in its relationship to the Bible. For example, a passage in its opening book, 1 Nephi 13:24-29, reads as follows:

“And the angel of the Lord said unto me: Thou hast beheld that the book [the Bible] proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew; and when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the plainness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record; and they bear record according to the truth which is in the Lamb of God.

“Wherefore, these things go forth from the Jews in purity unto the Gentiles, according to the truth which is in God.

“And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away.

“And all this have they done that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord, that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men.

“Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God.

“And after these plain and precious things were taken away it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles; and after it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles, yea, even across the many waters which thou hast seen with the Gentiles which have gone forth out of captivity, thou seest—because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book, which were plain unto the understanding of the children of men, according to the plainness which is the Lamb of God—because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceeding great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them.”

So then, to replace many of the “plain and precious things [which were] taken away from the book” (the Bible), other books, such as the *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, and *Pearl of Great Price*, are alleged to have been brought forth, as indicated in verses 34-40 of 1 Nephi 13:

“And it came to pass that the angel of the Lord spake unto me, saying: Behold, saith the Lamb of God, after I have visited the remnant of the house of Israel—and this remnant of whom I speak is the seed of thy father—wherefore, after I have visited them in judgment, and smitten them by the hand of the Gentiles, and after the Gentiles do stumble exceedingly, because of the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church, which is the mother of harlots, saith the Lamb—I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them, in mine own power, much of

my gospel, which shall be plain and precious, saith the Lamb.

“For, behold, saith the Lamb: I will manifest myself unto thy seed, that they shall write many things which I shall minister unto them, which shall be plain and precious; and after thy seed shall be destroyed, and dwindle in unbelief, and also the seed of thy brethren, behold, these things shall be *hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles, by the gift and power of the Lamb.*

“And *in them shall be written my gospel*, saith the Lamb, and my rock and my salvation.

“And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; and whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be.

“And it came to pass that I beheld the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the book of the Lamb of God, which had proceeded forth from the mouth of the Jew, that it came forth from the Gentiles unto the remnant of the seed of my brethren.

“And after it had come forth unto them *I beheld other books*, which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto them, unto the convincing of the Gentiles and the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Jews who were scattered upon all the face of the earth, that the records of the prophets and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are true.

“And the angel spake unto me, saying: *These last records, which thou hast seen among the Gentiles, shall establish the truth of the first*, which are of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them; and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and

people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved.” (Italics supplied.)

Now note these words found in the *Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 29:3-10:

“And because my words shall hiss forth—many of the Gentiles shall say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible.

“But thus saith the Lord God: O fools, they shall have a Bible; and it shall proceed forth from the Jews, mine ancient covenant people. And what thank they the Jews for the Bible which they receive from them? Yea, what do the Gentiles mean? Do they remember the travels, and the labors, and the pains of the Jews, and their diligence unto me, in bringing forth salvation unto the Gentiles? . . .

“Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews? . . .

“Wherefore, *because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written.*” (Italics supplied.)

What, now, are we discovering? Is the *Book of Mormon* sowing doubt in the minds of its readers as to the preservation of the Word of God? Is Mormonism asking us to believe that the infinite God has allowed careless and misguided men to remove from the Bible truths that are essential to our salvation, and therefore make necessary—in the nineteenth century—a “restoration” of these vital doctrines, so that man might have salvation?

Our overall investigation and comparison will lead us into channels of Mormon doctrine that are little understood by many outside the LDS membership. Yet we shall use as our sources of information on the beliefs

of Mormonism only the church's highest doctrinal authorities—and present their statements in the kindest way possible. We shall let the “sword of the Spirit” do any necessary “cutting,” for it is well qualified to divide between truth and error. The Bible's Author is supreme in wisdom and knowledge, infinite in power and majesty; therefore He is well able to propound and defend His truth as it is encompassed in the world's supreme Book of all books, the Holy Bible!

Continuing our plan of a “rigid examination,” we shall take our first step now, using only “evidences adduced from scripture and reason.”

Let us consider first the basic question as to whether sin was a part of God's plan for man, as claimed by Mormonism. Reversing Mormonism's plan to “establish the truth of the first” [the Bible] by the “other books,” we shall test the *Book of Mormon* by the Bible.

In 2 Nephi 2:22-25 we read these words: “And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end. *And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin.* But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things. *Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.*” (Italics supplied.)

This is reiterated in *Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Moses 5:10-12: “And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: *Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.*

And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: *Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed*, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.

“And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters.” (*Italics supplied.*)

Again, in Moses 6:47, 48: “And as Enoch spake forth the words of God, the people trembled, and could not stand in his presence. And he said unto them: Because that Adam fell, we are; and by his fall came death; and we are made partakers of misery and woe.”

To accept these teachings is to conclude that *God planned and desired that man should sin!*

This teaching of the *Book of Mormon* and *Pearl of Great Price* is substantiated by Brigham Young, second president and prophet of the LDS Church, when he stated that “the Lord . . . designed” that Adam and Eve should sin. His words follow, as quoted by President Joseph Fielding Smith:

“DEATH FOR ALL LIFE CAME BY FALL. President Brigham Young has said: ‘Some may regret that our first parents sinned. This is nonsense. If we had been there, and they had not sinned, we would have sinned. I will not blame Adam or Eve. Why? *Because it was necessary that sin should enter into the world*; no man could ever understand the principle of exaltation without its opposite; no one could ever receive an exaltation without being acquainted with its opposite. How did Adam and Eve sin? Did they come out in direct opposition to God and to his government? No. But they transgressed a command of the Lord, and through that transgression sin came into the world. *The Lord knew they would do this, and he had designed that they should.*’”—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, pp. 112, 113. Copyright Bookcraft,

1954; Printed by Deseret News Press, Salt Lake City, Utah. (Italics supplied.)

The same thought is portrayed in another passage:

“DEVILS DENIED MORTAL BODIES. The punishment of Satan and the third of the host of heaven who followed him, was that they were denied the privilege of being born into this world and receiving mortal bodies. They did not keep their first estate and were denied the opportunity of eternal progression. The Lord cast them out into the earth, where they became the tempters of mankind—the devil and his angels. ‘And it must needs be,’ the Lord has said, ‘that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet.’”—*Ibid.*, p. 65.

Mormonism’s doctrine of the preexistence of human beings in spirit form is so closely allied to the above LDS teaching that it is impossible to separate the two. We shall investigate this rather strange belief in preexistence in a later chapter. President Joseph Fielding Smith stresses that the LDS Church alone, among all religious persuasions, holds the preexistence doctrine. That teaching is one of two LDS doctrinal pillars that go far in “holding up” a large array of Mormonism’s tenets of belief.

The apostle Paul and other Bible writers make clear the true attitude of God the Father, and of Christ, the Son of God, toward sin by these Scripture statements:

“But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity*; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Heb. 1:8, 9). Christ was “pure” (1 John 3:3). He “did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Peter 2:22). He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from

sinner, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26). He "was manifested to *take away our sins*; and in him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). Jesus came "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26), "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (chap. 2:14). Isaiah, gospel prophet of the Old Testament, calls upon all men: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).

After reading these verses, how can the premise be accepted that He who hates iniquity "designed" that man should sin, and that the Lord actually made this an integral part of His plan of salvation?

Read again the LDS words: "Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed."—*Pearl of Great Price*, Moses 5:11. How can one accept this in the light of the fact that "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26-28).

Before sin entered, Adam and Eve were instructed to "multiply, and replenish the earth." *How can we then believe that it was Adam and Eve's sin that made it possible for them to have seed?* For God's command to Adam and Eve, as you recall, was given to them on the sixth day of creation week and was *before the entrance of sin*: "God saw

every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day” (verse 31).

Note these words from the pen of Joseph Fielding Smith:

“The gospel teaches us that if Adam and Eve had not partaken of that fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would have remained in the Garden of Eden in that same condition prevailing before the fall. Under those conditions they would have had no seed. ‘*Adam fell that men might be*’ as it was decreed in the heavens before the world was. Lehi has given us a very clear and comprehensive view of the mission of Adam and of the atonement of Jesus Christ, and the *Book of Mormon* is *very explicit in teaching these fundamental doctrines*. [Italics supplied.] In regard to the premortal condition of Adam and the entire earth, Lehi has stated the following:

“‘And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And *all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end*’ (2 Nephi 2:19-26).”—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 109.

These teachings from the *Book of Mormon* are fundamental to the entire structure of LDS belief, and they place one in the position as outlined by Apostle Orson Pratt, where a personal decision must of necessity be made: “This book [of Mormon] must be either *true* or *false*. . . . If true, no one can possibly be saved and reject it; if false, no one can possibly be saved and receive it.”

It would be well for the LDS people themselves to restudy these beliefs, giving them the “rigid examination” that Apostle Orson Pratt counseled.

Chapter 4

WAS THE GOSPEL TAKEN FROM THE EARTH?

Mormonism has been established on the premise that the gospel was *restored* to the earth by the Father and the Son through the Prophet Joseph Smith. This teaching is basic to the whole fabric of doctrine held by this church. We believe it is justifiable to conclude that if the Bible teaches that the gospel was never taken or driven from the earth, then there was nothing to “restore.”

In the writings of President Joseph Fielding Smith, various attempts are made to establish the Mormon claim that the church of Christ, and thus the gospel, was taken from the earth. We quote first from his *Essentials in Church History*, published by The Deseret Book Company, rev. 27th edition, 1974, page 9:

“The Church Taken from Among Men.—Instead of apostles and prophets there came, as time went on, a very different ecclesiastical order from that instituted by the Lord. *The Church established by the Redeemer was taken from the earth* because of continued persecution and apostasy, until there was but a dead form of the true Church left. The great ecclesiastical organization that arose and claimed to be the Church of Christ was of gradual growth. The change from truth to error was not made all in one day. It commenced in the first century and continued during the immediate centuries

that followed, until the Church established in the days of the apostles *was no more to be found among men*. Without the direction of inspired men, who could communicate with God, the change was a natural one.” (Italics supplied.)

Another statement is from *Doctrines of Salvation*, (copyright Bookcraft, 1955; printed by Deseret News Press), vol. 2, p. 154: “At various times during the history of the world the opportunity for mankind to receive the blessings of the gospel has been denied them. For instance, during the time of the apostasy, following the ministry of our Savior and his apostles down to the time of the restoration, the opportunity for men to receive the remission of their sins by baptism and partake of the other ordinances essential to exaltation was impossible. The Church with its authorized ministers was not on the earth. It is true that similar conditions have existed at other and more remote periods of time.”

Now, if these statements are true, every person should honestly and thoroughly investigate Mormonism. On the other hand, should they be found not Biblically sound, every honest Mormon should thoroughly restudy those teachings in which he is trusting for his eternal salvation. Some well-known Bible texts will help to make this matter crystal clear.

First, consider Jesus’ own words, given just prior to His ascension, as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20: “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Let us carefully analyze those three verses. “All

power is given into me,” said Jesus, “in heaven *and in earth*.” Was Christ’s commission to His followers to carry the gospel to all the world to be so ineffectual that Satan, the adversary of souls, would be able to drive Christ’s church with the gospel from the earth? When Jesus said that *all* power had been given to Him, was He asserting something that was not true? Was He claiming something not rightfully His, and beyond His ability to demonstrate?

The Saviour said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Was Jesus so powerless that one whom *He* had created and who had rebelled against Him was able to repress His great truths and prevent His followers from proclaiming them to the world? Are we to believe that this rebel and his host could overcome the One whom the revelator declares to be “King of kings, and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16)? *Is the creature greater than the Creator?* Was Satan mightier than the One by whom “were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. . . . Who is the beginning . . . that in all things he might have the pre-eminence” (Col. 1:16-18)?

Were Moses here today, and should he be asked if he believed Christ meant what He said in Matthew 28:18-20, he would without hesitation answer, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Num. 23:19).

“Lo, I am with you always [“to the close of the age,” R.S.V.].” That promise of the Son of God took care of the first century, and the second, the third, and on down to the twentieth, to the very end of time! The Bible sets forth Christ as the omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Saviour. This promise of the Saviour

leaves no place for defeat or failure of His plan for His church.

Never should we forget that the gospel commission given by the Saviour is an all-direction command; that Jesus taught His followers that theirs was a worldwide task; that all the powers of Satan could never destroy His truth or His church. The Mormon claim that for well over 1,000 years the saving gospel of Christ was denied to mankind attacks the very majesty and power of Christ, who emphatically declared to His followers concerning Himself, "*Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*" (Matt. 16:18). These indestructible words of the Master have sounded down the corridors of time for nearly twenty centuries.

In the light of these Bible statements, is Mormonism's opposing claim: "At various times during the history of the world the opportunity for mankind . . . to receive the remission of their sins by baptism . . . was impossible. The Church with its authorized ministers was not on the earth."—*Ibid.*

Which of these teachings shall we believe?

Never has there been a moment of time when the God of heaven has not had His representatives on this earth. Even at the time of the Deluge, faithful Noah, "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5), proclaimed God to the people for 120 years, then safely rode in the ark upon the stormy waters. In the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, God still had faithful Lot. Even though, because of his careless home discipline, Lot lost nearly his entire family, the Lord spoke of him through Peter as "just Lot," and "that righteous man" (verses 7, 8).

Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, Isaiah, the gospel prophet of the Old Testament, declared of God's people, "Ye are my witnesses, saith the

Lord, that I am God" (Isa. 43:12). The Saviour Himself told His followers, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). That "light" has never gone out!

In the last book of the Bible, the history of the entire Christian church is prophetically portrayed in the messages to the "seven churches," declaring the power of Christ and of His church, and its eternal existence. True, there were dark days for the church, but the deeper the darkness brought on by apostasy and by the persecuting power of Satan and his agents, the brighter shone the gospel light through God's faithful witnesses.

The apostle Paul wrote to Titus, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to *all men*, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13).

Here we are distinctly told that God's grace was for "all men" and was to extend from Paul's day to "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." There was to be no cessation of the call to men to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." This is the call of the gospel of Christ. It has always been in every century. It will continue to be until the Saviour's return to this world for His people.

In Acts we read that though God has allowed "all nations to walk in their own ways. *Nevertheless he left not himself without witness*" (Acts 14:16, 17). The Creator of the world and of the universe is too wise and too great to leave His truth and cause on earth without witness. To entertain the idea that He would do so is unthinkable!

In Acts 17 are these words: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as

though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us" (verses 24-27).

How true, that the Lord of heaven is "not far from every one of us"! This has been so in every century since Christ walked on the earth. His promise to His followers is sure and certain, for He said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5).

Shortly before Jesus gave His life on Calvary, He prayed to His Father on behalf of His church. In this intercessory prayer is unimpeachable evidence that His church, and the authority He gave His followers to teach and to preach in His name, should remain on this earth. He said, "*I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world*, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. . . . Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. . . . And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:15-26).

When Christ was on earth He repeatedly defeated Satan. This is verified by the story of His wilderness temptations, as recorded in Matthew 4:1-11. Note especially these words: "Get thee hence, Satan. . . . Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him" (verses 10, 11). Satan was defeated by Christ, and this has been true in every century from then until now.

Were the gospel and the church of Christ taken or driven from the earth? The Bible does not say so! To the contrary, it is made dramatically clear that *the church*

endured the period of persecution at the very period of time when the LDS Church declares that the gospel “was not on the earth.”

Now turn to Revelation 12, which President Joseph Fielding Smith uses in his attempt to prove that “the Church with its authorized ministers was not on the earth” during the period of great persecution, more familiarly known as the Dark Ages. Actually, this prophecy portrays the conquering power of Christ and His church over Satan and his evil angels; not the defeat of Christ and His church. Let us carefully analyze the prophecy.

Verses 7 to 9 of Revelation 12 describe the war in heaven between Michael and His angels and the dragon and his angels, and the casting out of Satan from heaven to earth. Then John writes: “I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, *and the power of his Christ*: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night” (verse 10).

“And they [God’s people] *overcame him* [Satan, “the accuser of our brethren”] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon [Satan] saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman [the church] which brought forth the man child [Christ]” (verses 11-13).

Millions—only the recording angels know how many millions—“loved not their lives unto the death.” Multitudes gave their lives for the Saviour, as He had already given His life for them. “And to the woman [the church] were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly

into the wilderness, into her place, where she is *nourished* for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (verse 14). Using the prophetic year of 360 days,* each day representing a literal year (Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6), "a time" would equal one year of days, or 360 years; "times" would equal two years of days, or 720 years; and "half a time," 180 years—a total of 1,260 years. This same prophetic period is set forth in Revelation 12:6 as "a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

During that period of great persecution, the woman, representing the church, was "nourished"—*not* forsaken or "taken from the earth." The Greek term means to support, provide for, to feed. Though the church suffered almost beyond description during the Dark Ages, it survived the long period of 1,260 years of papal supremacy. Verse 6 of Revelation 12 clearly shows God's care during that long period: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should *feed* her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days [years]."

"And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth" (verses 15, 16). Bible students understand that water is sometimes used in Scripture as a symbol of

* That a prophetic year, which has no relationship to a literal year, has 360 days is seen by an examination of several texts. In Revelation 11:3 we have a prophetic period of "a thousand two hundred and threescore days." This same prophetic period is mentioned as "forty and two months" in verse 2. The 1260 days, divided by 42 months, gives us a month of 30 days, and this, multiplied by 12, comes to a year of 360 days.

In Revelation 12:6 we have the same 1260 days referred to. Verse 14 calls the same period "a time, and times, and half a time." It is understood that a "time" means a prophetic year, that "times" is two years, and half a time, half a prophetic year. The three and a half years divided into 1260 days again gives us 360 days to a prophetic year.

people, or multitudes (see Rev. 17:15). The opposite of symbolic “water” would be “the wilderness” (chap. 12:6, 14), as an unpopulated, or sparsely populated, area of “the earth” (verse 16).

Accepting this interpretation, we hold that verse 16 predicts that the church in her struggle for survival would be assisted by the opening up of a new land. Is this not exactly what took place? “The serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman.” For what purpose? “That he might cause her to be carried away of the flood”—destroyed, annihilated.

But what had God planned? A refuge, a place of freedom, was provided where people could flee from the “flood” of persecution. We believe, as do the Mormons, that this great nation, the United States of America, has been “a place prepared” in the providence of God, to which His people could flee from the persecutions of the Old World to the New World in which they could enjoy civil and religious freedom.

The last verse of Revelation 12 identifies the remnant church of God *on earth*: “And the dragon [Satan] was wroth with the woman [church], and went to make war with the remnant [that which remains] of her seed, *which keep the commandments of God*, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (verse 17).

That remnant church is on the earth today! And this pointed prophecy of Revelation 12 has brought us to our own day, when “the everlasting gospel” of Christ is being proclaimed “to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (chap. 14:6). It is going to every people, whether their skin be yellow, brown, white, or black, because God tells us that every one “that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35).

During what is known as the Dark Ages, many of God’s people were forced in various lands to seek ref-

uge in the caves and rocky fastnesses of the mountains. They were hunted as beasts. Many suffered death by the sword, the stake, and in other horrible ways. But throughout the long period of persecution, men and women—the noble as well as the peasant—treasured in their bosoms the truths of God. Even though multitudes went to their death as martyrs in devoted faithfulness to Christ, the church was “nourished,” and it witnessed and *endured*. This undeniable fact refutes the assumption that God’s true church—entrusted with the gospel of salvation—was “taken from the earth,” and later was “restored” through Joseph Smith early in the nineteenth century.

Does not this also make unthinkable and impossible the declaration that “at various times during the history of the world the opportunity for mankind to receive the blessings of the gospel has been denied them.” Equally erroneous is the claim that “the opportunity for men to receive the remission of their sins by baptism . . . was impossible,” or that “the Church with its authorized ministers was not on the earth.” It is impossible to “restore” something that was *never* taken away, *never lost*!

And what is President Smith’s explanation of Revelation 12? After quoting the chapter, he states:

“The woman is the church; she is glorified by the light of heaven. The twelve stars are the apostles. The son born to her is the Priesthood which is to rule the earth by the truth of the gospel, which is the rod of iron. Because of the persecution and power of the dragon, the Priesthood is taken back to heaven, and the woman is forced to flee from the face of the earth. The dragon is Satan who rebelled in heaven and prevailed upon one third of the spirits to follow him. He with his followers was cast out of heaven into the earth where he made war on the church and drove it into the wilderness. The dragon then made war on all those who tried to live the

truth who are called the seed of the woman. Remember the angel was showing John what was to take place following the vision, or in later times.

“In the year 1830, this woman—the church—with her man child returned to the earth. The power of the dragon was overcome and the Lord has proclaimed that the gospel now restored shall never be taken from the earth, for this is the dispensation in which the Lord is gathering in one all things both which are in heaven and on earth.”—*The Restoration of All Things*, pp. 82, 83.

And now may I ask, Are we to believe that the power of the dragon totally vanquished the power of Christ, the Son of God, throughout the Middle Ages and that Jesus did not regain His supremacy until the year 1830?

We hold that the “man child” (Rev. 12:5) was Jesus. Through Herod the Great, Satan tried to destroy Christ as a babe, and failed. The combined powers of evil could not overcome Him. Nor could all the power of Satan and his angels ever destroy His church or drive it from the earth. Jesus promised to be with it “alway, even unto the end of the world.” His true church and His loyal people through all the ages and in all nations are still here. And they will remain until He returns in the clouds of heaven to take them to Himself.

Matthew 28:18-20, Revelation 12:1-17, and other Bible verses already quoted *disprove* the teaching that the gospel and the church were removed from the earth. The Lord Jesus Christ has always had His faithful representatives on the earth.

God has His remnant, commandment-keeping church on the earth today, “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). He has a great multitude of people around the world who are sincerely seeking to follow Christ. And where are they? They are to be found in every denomination, in every church body, including the LDS. They are the men and women

who love the Lord Jesus Christ with all their hearts and who, if God's truth could be vindicated and glorified thereby, would love "not their lives unto the death."

Chapter 5

MORMONISM'S DOCTRINE OF PREEXISTENCE

President Joseph Fielding Smith makes a number of emphatic statements in support of the preexistence doctrine. We shall quote from his writings in order that we may understand this unique and important subject as it is believed by the LDS Church. But first, let us read a statement with which we wholeheartedly agree:

“Salvation should be a subject uppermost in the minds of all men. It is, without question, the most important subject that could possibly be considered, and yet there are so few among the many who pay any attention whatever to this great and important theme, as it may be applied in their lives.

“All truth connected with the plan of salvation is reasonable and comprehensible.”—Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 2, p. 1. (Italics his.)

Now, would it not be well for us to determine if the LDS interpretation and teaching of “truth connected with the plan of salvation” is solidly in harmony with the Bible? Are we *naturally* immortal? Did you and I and all mankind “preexist” before we were born in this world?

Here is one of President Smith’s initial statements:

“We had an existence before we came to this world. We lived in the spirit, and were in the presence of our Father in heaven, who is the Father of the spirits of all

men; and there we walked by sight, for we were in his presence.

"It was necessary, in order that we might receive a fulness of blessings and opportunities and become like unto our Father, for us to pass through this mortal probation. Hence, this earth was prepared; and we were sent down here to receive bodies of flesh and bones and to be quickened by blood; and to partake of all the vicissitudes of life as we find them here on this earth, that we might, through obedience to the principles of the gospel, know good from evil."—*Ibid.*, pp. 1, 2.

From volume 1 of the same work, beginning on page 56, we quote:

"The Latter-day Saints are the only people in the world, as far as my knowledge goes, who have a clear, distinct doctrine in regard to the questions: Where did we come from? Why are we here? and, Where are we going? *I believe we are the only people in the world who believe in the pre-existence of the human family.* There are many who believe in the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, but they do not believe that we, individually, lived before we came into this life. . . .

"We lived in the presence of God in the spirit before we came here. We desired to be like him, we saw him, we were in his presence. *There is not a soul who has not seen both the Father and the Son, and in the spirit world we were in their presence;* but it became necessary for us to gain experiences which could not be obtained in that world of spirits, and so we were accorded the privilege of coming down here upon this earth." (Italics supplied.)

We read further, "When we lived in the presence of our Father, we were not like him; we were just spirits. We did not have bodies of flesh and bones, but he did. He was a glorious personage with a body of flesh and bones, his spirit and body being inseparably connected,

and his body shining with a brightness beyond the brightness of the sun. *We saw him in his majesty*; and when the plan of salvation was presented to us, it was made known to us that if we would pass through this mortal existence, and be true and faithful to all the commandments our Father would give unto us—thus keeping the second estate as we had kept the first—we, too, eventually would have the privilege of coming back into his presence with bodies of flesh and bones which would also shine with the brightness of the sun, to share in all the fulness of his kingdom. . . .

“We were duly informed that in this mortal life we would have to walk by faith. Previously we had walked by sight, but now was to come a period of trial to see if by faith we would be true to every covenant and commandment our Father required at our hands. We were informed that many would fail. Those who rebelled against the light which would be revealed to them should be deprived of exaltation. They could not come back to dwell in the presence of God, but would have to take a place in some other sphere where they would be blessed according to their works, and likewise restricted in their privileges.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 57, 58.

Now, carefully note Joseph Fielding Smith’s statement on how the plan of salvation was presented in the alleged period of preexistence:

“There was a council held in heaven, when the Lord called before him his spirit children and presented to them a plan by which they should come down on this earth; partake of mortal life and physical bodies; pass through a probation of mortality, and then go on to a higher exaltation through the resurrection which should be brought about through the atonement of his Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ. The thought of passing through mortality and partaking of all the vicissitudes of earth life in which they would gain experiences

through suffering, pain, sorrow, temptation and affliction, as well as the pleasures of life in this mundane existence, and then, if faithful, passing on through the resurrection to eternal life in the kingdom of God, to be like him, *filled them with the spirit of rejoicing, and they 'shouted for joy.'* The experience and knowledge obtained in this mortal life they could not get in any other way, and the receiving of a physical body was essential to their exaltation."—*Ibid.*, p. 58. (Italics supplied.)

Joseph Smith quoted Brigham Young in his *Doctrines of Salvation*, volume 2, page 88: "There are multitudes of pure and holy spirits waiting to take tabernacles, now what is our duty? To prepare tabernacles for them; to take a course that will not tend to drive those spirits into the families of the wicked, where they will be trained in wickedness, debauchery, and every species of crime. *It is the duty of every righteous man and woman to prepare tabernacles for all the spirits they can.'*" In other words, it is believed that the preexisting spirits are eagerly waiting to inhabit the body of every baby born into our world.

Finally, in another statement by the same LDS authority, we read these astonishing deductions:

"When men deny the resurrection of Christ and the coming forth from their graves of all mankind, it is a confession on their part that they are ignorant of the work of the Lord regarding the destiny of man. Our existence in mortality is most important; it is not accidental. *It was never intended that we should pass through this life without coming in contact with sin—without temptation, without mortality.*

"Adam was sent into the world to perform a mission, including the bringing to pass these very things, that we in the mortal state might obtain experiences by coming in contact with all the vicissitudes of mortal life. *In this way we receive an education* that could not be obtained in

any other way. *So mortality came through the will of God, and through the fall of man, death has passed upon all men. Through the atonement of Jesus Christ, life is restored again, and death is overcome and destroyed.*”—*Ibid.*, p. 261. (Italics supplied.)

We have quoted at length from a former president of the LDS Church to give a clear presentation of this doctrine held by it, for the doctrine of preexisting human spirits is fundamental to many other teachings of this denomination.

Let us consider, first, the statement by Joseph Fielding Smith, that “Adam was *sent* into the world to perform a mission, *including the bringing to pass these very things.*” What things? According to Mormonism, his “mission” was to lead the human family into “*contact with sin*” by throwing open the doors of “temptation” to every person who would live in this world and who reaches the age of accountability. Pursuing this reasoning further, he says, “In this way we receive an education that could not be obtained in any other way.” An “education” in what? In *sin*? Yes, we are sorry to say, Mormonism teaches that this experience in the knowledge of evil is not only *desirable* but *necessary* for every person.

We would ask, Is Christianity’s loving Creator to be thus portrayed? Did God, before our world was created, plan for you and me to have a whole lifetime of experience “with sin,” which inevitably brings *disease, disaster, heartache, fear, terror, tragedy, heartbreak, pain, death, separation, tears*? Is this the God whom we are taught to call “our Father which art in heaven”? (Matt. 6:9). No! A thousand times, No!

Note again this statement quoted above from the same LDS pen: “There is not a soul who has not seen both the Father and the Son, and in the spirit world we were in their presence.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 56.

Brigham Young is even more emphatic on this point: "I want to tell you, each and every one of you, that you are well acquainted with God our Heavenly Father, or the great Elohim. You are all well acquainted with him, for there is not a soul of you but what has lived in his house and dwelt with him year after year; and yet you are seeking to become acquainted with him, when the fact is, you have merely forgotten what you did know."—John A. Widtsoe, Comp., *Discourses of Brigham Young*, Deseret Book Co., 1925, p. 50.

According to these authorized spokesmen for the LDS Church, "every one" ever born into this world was or is "well acquainted with God our Heavenly Father." However, what are the words spoken by the Lord concerning Cyrus, who was to lead the Medes and Persians in conquering Babylon in 539 B.C.?

"Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, *though thou hast not known me*" (Isa. 45:1-4).

In His great foreknowledge, the Lord said of Cyrus, "I have surnamed thee." God knew all about Cyrus. But Cyrus did not know God. And this message of God was spoken through Isaiah approximately 150 years before the birth of Cyrus. Therefore, if the preexisting spirit of Cyrus were right then—a century and a half before he was born—living in God's "house" and dwelling "with

him year after year" in the very "presence" of "both the Father and the Son," how could the Lord say, "*Thou hast not known me*"? Without doubt Cyrus would have known the Lord if he were then actually living in His presence.

The Lord reiterates this in verse 5: "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, *though thou hast not known me.*" Long before the birth of Cyrus, God in His foreknowledge knew Cyrus would do His will (see Isa. 44:28).

But this is not all. Mormonism refers to Jeremiah 1:5 in the Bible as "proof" of the preexistence of man. Let us read that Bible passage: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

Of course God knew Jeremiah, just as He knew about Cyrus before his birth occurred. The great Creator of all mankind is both omnipotent and omniscient, for He says, "I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out of the heavens, and all their host have I commanded" (Isa. 45:12). The God whom all Christians worship is infinite in wisdom. His capabilities are boundless. He knows all there is to know about everything that has ever taken place, and His foreknowledge of everything that is ever to take place is limitless.

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul speaks of God's planning for some things beforehand. Concerning Abraham, the apostle to the Gentiles wrote that God "callesth those things which *be not* as though they were" (Rom. 4:17). *The New English Bible* throws light on this same verse: "This promise [to Abraham], then, was valid before God, the God in whom he put his faith, the God who makes the dead live and summons things that are *not yet in existence* as if they already were."

What God decides to do cannot fail, though at times He may revise or modify a plan because of man's obedience or disobedience. Therefore He may state it as an already accomplished fact, as in Genesis 17:5: "Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; *for a father of many nations have I made thee.*" Note that this statement was made by the Lord years before the birth of Isaac, and without doubt the Lord spoke in this same manner of both Cyrus and Jeremiah.

Mormonism's doctrine of a preexisting spirit of man, and its belief in an "ever-living" spirit (which we shall consider in a later chapter) lead to a great array of teachings that are basic to Mormonism's—

Temple work for the dead.

Genealogical work—searching into the almost-endless history of one's ancestors—which is an integral part of the temple work for the dead.

Baptism for the dead.

Doctrine of "spirits in prison."

Doctrine of "three degrees of glory."

Belief regarding "conditional" and "unconditional" immortality.

Claim that the apostles Peter, James, and John brought to Joseph Smith the Melchizedek priesthood—which the LDS Church claims to possess and to which it points as its authority for preaching the gospel.

Belief that man can progress to an equality with God.

Formerly held doctrine concerning plurality of wives.

Teaching on temple marriages.

For further irrefutable evidence that Mormonism advocates belief in the preexistence of the human spirit and the necessity of man's sinning, note the following

from Joseph Fielding Smith:

“TWO PURPOSES OF EARTH LIFE. *We came into this world to die.* That was understood before we came here. It is part of the plan, all discussed and arranged long before men were placed upon the earth. When Adam was sent into this world, it was with the understanding that he would violate a law, transgress a law, in order to bring to pass this mortal condition which we find ourselves in today. There are two purposes for life—one *to gain experience* that could not be obtained in any other way, and *the other to obtain these tabernacles* of flesh and bones. Both of these purposes are vital to the existence of man.”—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 66.

“THE FALL OF ADAM WAS NOT A SIN. It may seem very cruel to us without any understanding of all the circumstances, to know that the Fall brought upon us all such awful consequences, *and made it possible for an infinite atonement to be offered to amend the broken law.* Adam and Eve did not come here in a mortal state. They *had* to come in the manner in which they did and *then transgress the law.* The transgression of that law, *contrary to the view of many, was not a sin.* It was not a sin any more than the transgression in the laboratory by a chemist in combining two substances and creating another entirely different from the first. It was not a sin to bring to pass mortality, a condition which was *essential* to the eternal welfare of man. The Fall changed the nature of Adam and Eve to fit them for the condition in which we now are. After the coming of an angel with the plan of salvation informing Adam and Eve of the redemption which was to be made by Jesus Christ, Eve rejoiced and said:

“‘Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.’—*Pearl of Great*

Price, Moses 5:11. (Italics supplied.)

“All of this had come because of the Fall. Yes, it was ‘inevitable’; it had to be. If there had been some other way, you and I may both be agreed that our Eternal Father would have chosen it. God is not the author of death nor sin. There may be some things that we have to accept on faith, and we should prepare ourselves to accept all things which the Lord reveals, whether we fully understand them or not.”—*Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 2, Deseret Book, 1958, pp. 214, 215.

In this latter statement, the existence of sin is again justified, making the Creator responsible for planning for sin. For here we are told that Adam and Eve had to transgress the law. And the climaxing thought is that it was “*essential* to the eternal welfare of man,” “it was ‘inevitable’; it had to be”; that we should “accept” “some things . . . on faith.”

Yet with all this, we find in the same paragraph that “God is not the author of death nor sin.”

LDS Apostle Orson Pratt suggests that “reason” be employed in any investigation of the *Book of Mormon* and the beliefs of Mormonism. This we try to do. Is this not also necessary on the part of those who defend Mormonism’s doctrines? Does not the Bible plainly state that “*sin* is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4)? Therefore, reason tells us that an omniscient God did not plan a situation of sin in order to make “it possible for an infinite atonement to be offered to amend the broken law.” Did a righteous heavenly Father desire the curse of sin, to make possible the sufferings and death of His only begotten Son? Did God order the transgression of His law that righteousness might appear, when heaven was already inhabited with righteous beings only?

To “accept on faith” an unscriptural concept of the King of heaven and His plan of salvation for mankind

requires, we believe, a blind and unreasoning faith. To so accept it could mean eternal loss, for, by Mormonism's own declaration, "the nature of the message in the *Book of Mormon* is such, that if true, no one can possibly be saved and reject it; *if false*, no one can possibly be saved and receive it."—*Orson Pratt's Works*, p. 107.

Chapter 6

MORMONISM'S PRIESTHOOD AND AUTHORITY

Mormonism's priesthood and authority are rooted in its teaching that the gospel has been *restored* through Joseph Smith, and Mormonism's claim to divine authority is made on that premise. We read:

“NO MODERN AUTHORITY WITHOUT RESTORATION. Following the apostasy from the doctrine and practices of the Church of Jesus Christ of former-day saints, it became necessary that there be an opening of the heavens, and for the Lord to speak again, and by his own mouth and the mouth of his ancient disciples again to restore the *truth* which had been lost. In the apostasy, the *authority to act in the name of the Lord had been taken away from the earth*, and as John saw in his revelation, the priesthood was taken back to God while the Church of Jesus Christ had been driven into the wilderness.

“There was but one way for that priesthood to be *restored* to men on the earth—by an opening of the heavens. This was done, and John the Baptist came first with the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, then came Peter, James, and John with the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which authorities were given to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.”—Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, pp. 87, 88. (Italics supplied.)

In making claims such as these, Mormonism has encountered a very difficult problem—that of proving to the world that the truth of God actually had “been lost,” and that “the authority to act in the name of the Lord” had truly been “taken away from the earth.”

In chapter four, “Was the Gospel Taken From the Earth?” we concluded that if this claim of Mormonism were true, the very Messiahship of Christ is brought into serious question, for His parting words to His church were, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20).

We discovered also that such a teaching would imply that the Lord God of heaven was without authorized witness upon the earth during the long period of apostasy. This is extremely difficult to believe, for God was still God. He was then; He is today; He always shall be. No one can take away His infinite power, nor the power He bestows upon His church. He is the eternal God, “with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17); “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8). He is “‘the Rock, his work is perfect’” (Deut. 32:4, R.S.V.).

Is it not just as difficult to believe that the *authority* to act in the name of the Lord was removed from the earth as that the truth was lost during the centuries of apostasy?

True, there was the long period of time, known as the Dark Ages, when the powers of darkness seemed to have almost extirpated those who held aloft the light of the gospel. An apostate, though professed Christian, power seemed to control the souls of most men. And in its dominant position it swayed the arm of the civil powers to attain its own ends.

Mormonism, as we shall see, seems to deal in absolutes. Whereas the Bible predicted an apostasy, or “falling away,” from the truth of the gospel (2 Thess.

2:3), the LDS Church teaches a *total* apostasy. It says that the true church was taken from among men, and that the authority and gifts to preach the gospel disappeared entirely from the earth.

We quote Joseph Fielding Smith:

"THE APOSTASY PREDICTED. It was well understood in the days of the apostles that there was to come a 'falling away' from Gospel truth, and that spiritual darkness would be enthroned over *all* the earth. This darkness would bring to a close the dispensation of the meridian of time. A few of these predictions are here given. (Isaiah 24:5-7; Amos 8:11, 12; Matthew 24:4, 5, 23, 34; 2 Timothy 4:3, 4; 2 Peter 2:1-3.)

"THE CHURCH DRIVEN INTO THE WILDERNESS. So we might go on with any number of passages taken from the prophetic warnings of the apostles and prophets. John the Revelator saw this great apostasy, and the *Church driven into the wilderness, in other words, taken from among men*. This vision is so significant that it is strange why any can fail to understand it. John saw in his vision a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. This woman was about to be delivered of a man child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Then he saw another wonder in heaven, for a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads, came upon the scene, and prepared to devour the child as soon as it was born. This dragon, we are informed, was so powerful that his tail drew one-third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. The Latter-day Saints have no difficulty in understanding the meaning of this. *The dragon is Satan who drew one-third of the spirits of heaven away in his rebellion, when he was cast out into the earth. The woman is the Church of Jesus Christ. The child who was appointed to rule all nations with a rod of iron*

is the Priesthood. We learn from the *Book of Mormon* that the rod of iron is the Gospel by which the nations were to be ruled had it not been for the interference of the dragon. We are informed in the vision that protection was given to the woman who was given 'two wings of an eagle,' by which she had power to fly *into the wilderness*, where she was to be nourished for 'a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.' When the dragon discovered that the woman had escaped his power and that her child had been caught up to the throne of God, he was 'wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.' Revelation 12.

"THE PRIESTHOOD TAKEN INTO HEAVEN. The history of the first fifteen hundred years after the birth of Christ completely fulfills this prophetic vision. Satan in his wrath drove the woman into the wilderness, *or from the earth; the power of the Priesthood was taken from among men*, and after the *Church with its authority and gifts disappeared from the earth*, then in his anger the serpent continued his war upon all who had faith and sought the testimony of Jesus, desiring to worship God according to the dictates of conscience. *So successful did he become* that his dominion extended over *all the known world*, and *every creature* was forced to worship according to the manner which he prescribed. *Free agency*, the inherent gift of God to every soul, *was taken from men*, and they were shackled to the plan which Lucifer proposed in the heavens at the rebellion. This is the plan of compulsion and the destruction of that personal liberty which God has given to every creature."—*The Progress of Man*, pp. 163-166. (Italics supplied.)

According to this Mormon doctrine, not only were Christ's true church and its gifts and authority to preach the gospel "taken from among men," but the "free

agency" of man was taken from him during the centuries of apostasy. (Does this mean there was *no sin* throughout all those centuries?) It also alleges that "every creature" came under the complete domination of Satan, and that he became "so successful" in his efforts against the Son of God and His church "that his dominion extended over all the known world." It is true that during those long centuries many lost their freedom, but we say, *never* did they lose their free agency.

On the following three points we agree with President Smith's interpretation:

1. There was an apostasy.
2. The "dragon" was Satan.
3. The "woman" who "brought forth a man child" (Rev. 12:13) was the true church of Jesus Christ.

This, however, is as far as we can go with Mormonism's interpretation of Revelation 12. Consider the following:

1. Though there has been an apostasy, a falling away from the truth of God, and a long period of great persecution known as the Dark Ages, this was *by no means* a period of total victory for Satan and of total defeat for Christ.

2. Satan's power has never been great enough to drive Christ's church "from the earth."

3. The "man child" was *not* "the Priesthood." It was neither the Levitical priesthood, which had existed until it was no longer needed after Christ died on the cross; nor the Melchizedek priesthood, of which Jesus Christ alone is declared to be High Priest. Nor is it the "authority to act in the name of the Lord." Instead, *the "man child" symbolized the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.* Christ, as the Messiah, came to this world to redeem all men; and He is the One who said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18).

4. Throughout the entire period of persecution of

the true followers of the Lord Jesus, His church remained on earth and possessed all the gifts given to it by God through the Holy Spirit, and had "the everlasting gospel to preach . . . to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6), until the Saviour shall return the second time.

5. Finally, to maintain that man's "free agency" was "taken" from him during the period of apostasy is to endeavor to nullify the Redeemer's invitations, which are at the very heart of the gospel: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Matt. 11:28; Rev. 22:17).

Would an omniscient and omnipotent God send out the invitation to come to Him and drink freely of the water of salvation, and *then for many centuries allow man's free choice to be withdrawn from him so that he could not come?*

Let us briefly review the vision as it was given to John the Revelator: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne" (Rev. 12:1-5).

In Scripture the figure of a pure woman is sometimes used to symbolize the pure church (Isa. 54:5, 6).

Jeremiah wrote, "I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman" (Jer. 6:2). Conversely, a corrupt woman is used to represent the apostate church (see Rev. 17:3-6).

The marriage relationship is sometimes used in the Bible to represent the union between Christ and His believers, as explained by Paul: "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2). And John writes, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:7, 8). The "bride" of Christ must be pure and possess the "righteousness of saints."

Thus the woman of Revelation 12:1, "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars," symbolizes the church of Christ. The sun represents the glory of the gospel dispensation. The moon, which shines with the reflected light of the sun and so here represents the types and symbols of the Old Testament, pointed forward to Jesus, the Lamb of God, and His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. The "church" was crowned with a "crown of twelve stars," which stars, most commentators agree, refer to the twelve apostles of Christ, whom He used in establishing His church.

The woman "being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. . . . And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne." Who could be so important as to be described as a "man child" given birth by the church? No one could be meant but the Lord Jesus. He was born in

“Bethlehem Ephratah, . . . to be ruler over Israel, His goings forth are from of old, from days of eternity” (Micah 5:2, Modern Language Bible). *It was none other than Christ the Lord.* It was He, the Christ Child, whom Satan and Herod sought to destroy at His birth (Matt. 2:13-16; Rev. 12:4). This is strongly attested when we understand that the prophecy that He “was to rule all nations with a rod of iron” is quoted from the Messianic prophecy of Psalm 2:9. It is confirmed as we find the same phrase in Revelation 19:5, which chapter is definitely descriptive of Christ. It was Christ who “was caught up unto God, and to his throne,” after His death and resurrection.

Though we agree with Mormonism that the “dragon” primarily symbolizes Satan, we regretfully have to disagree with the idea that the “third part of the stars of heaven” (verse 4) refers to preexisting human “spirits in heaven.”* They represent the angels who joined Lucifer in his rebellion, as described by John: “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (verse 9).

Now, as we discuss Mormonism’s “priesthood” and its ramifications, we shall continue to allow LDS authorities on doctrine to state their beliefs on that subject from their own published writings, which we shall compare with the Bible.

Joseph Fielding Smith makes this rather strange statement:

“WORK OF JOSEPH SMITH COMPARED TO REFORMERS. The fact, so conclusively proved, that there has been an apostasy, shows the necessity of a restoration of the

* For further related reading see Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Progress of Man* (Deseret Book Co., 1964), pp. 65, 66, 76, 77.

gospel. It is a remarkable fact that Martin Luther, John Knox, John Calvin, the Wesleys, and the other reformers who attempted to correct the evils of the Catholic church, did not think of this great truth. It was left for Joseph Smith to make the wonderful discovery.

"It is also strange that the reformers did not discover the necessity for the restoration of the Church as in primitive days with its divine authority, but *assumed* to take the authority upon themselves to organize churches and societies of their own. It was reserved for Joseph Smith to teach the world the necessity for these things."—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 191.

Surely there was good reason why Martin Luther, John Knox, John Calvin, the Wesleys, and other Reformers "did not think of this great truth" of "the necessity of a restoration of the gospel." It was that there is in the Bible no indication that the true church, with the gospel, would be removed from the earth before the second advent of Christ. Through the Protestant Reformers the Lord God of heaven was, step by step, bringing to light some of Christ's teachings that had been neglected by many during the Dark Ages. The Holy Spirit used earnest men of God to call attention anew to certain Bible teachings that had been almost forgotten. For instance, Martin Luther proclaimed the glorious teaching of righteousness by faith through Christ alone. His words before the Diet at Worms, and before Charles V and the great council, disprove that the gospel had been "removed from the earth."

In his defense Luther said, "Yet I am but a mere man, and not God; I shall therefore defend myself as Christ did. 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil' (John 18:23), said he. How much more should I, who am but dust and ashes, and who may so easily go astray, desire every man to state his objections to my doctrine?"

“‘For this reason, most serene emperor and you, most illustrious princes, and all men of every degree, I conjure you, by the mercy of God, to prove from the writings of the prophets and apostles that I have erred. As soon as I am convinced of this, I will retract every error, and be the first to lay hold of my books and throw them into the fire.

“‘What I have just said plainly shows, I hope, that I have carefully weighed and considered the dangers to which I expose myself; but, far from being dismayed, I rejoice to see that the Gospel is now, as in former times, a cause of trouble and dissension. This is the character—this is the destiny of the Word of God. “I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword,” said Jesus Christ (Matthew 10:34). God is wonderful and terrible in his counsels; beware lest, by presuming to quench dissensions, you should persecute the holy Word of God, and draw down upon yourselves a frightful deluge of insurmountable dangers, of present disasters, and eternal desolation.’”—*D’Aubigné’s History of the Reformation*, p. 244.

This statement shows that Luther was not looking for a “restored” gospel. Neither did he need to. The gospel was there, and he himself was proclaiming it! The gospel was on the earth, and he was defending it with his life! The gospel had not been removed from the earth, and he was standing in its defense against great opposition.

John Knox was an equally fearless champion of the gospel in Scotland. He so preached the gospel of Christ that it shook Scotland even to the throne.

John Calvin taught that Christ would come again to this world, which doctrine is still the fervent hope of the gospel.

The Wesleys, John and Charles, through sermon and inspired song preached Christ and Him crucified,

risen, and ascended, which has ever been the very soul of the gospel.

If there was no gospel, for what did Huss and Jerome die, when they were burned at the stake as "heretics" from the Church of Rome?

John Wycliffe, the "Morning Star of the Reformation," Tyndale, Frith, and Ridley—all preached the gospel of the living Christ in England, until millions knew it as the guide for their lives.

Would Mormonism have men believe that only its leaders and members have felt the severe sting of hatred and persecution? Listen to Joseph Fielding Smith: "For upwards of 100 years the revealed gospel has stood the test of criticism, attack, and bitter opposition. I think we can say that *never before in recorded history do we have an account of truth passing through such a crucible and being put to such a test as has the truth known in the world as Mormonism.*"—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 190.

On the same page President Smith says, "Had Joseph Smith been a fraud, the work he established would have been destroyed many years ago." Consider this statement for a moment or two. The *Book of Mormon* denounces the Roman Catholic Church as the "abominable church": "And it came to pass that he said unto me: Look, and behold that great and abominable church, which is the mother of abominations, whose foundation is the devil" (1 Nephi 14:9).

We ask, then, Why has the Roman Catholic Church not come to its end long before this? In this world, that which may be a fraud or an evil does not always or necessarily come to a quick end. In fact, more often its life is extended. Therefore, the durability of the church that Joseph Smith established cannot be accepted as logical proof of its divine authenticity.

Christian Science began at approximately the same time as Mormonism. It is still in existence today. Surely

the LDS Church does not accept this as proof that Christian Science has all the truth of God.

Now, we ask, does Mormonism find its authority in the Bible, or does it look elsewhere? The following statement gives their answer: "The commission given by our Lord to his disciples nearly two thousand years ago does not authorize any man today to officiate in the ordinances of the gospel or to preach and expound the scriptures by divine authority. The *Bible* does not and *cannot* give to any man this right to exercise the functions of the priesthood. This can only come, as in days of old, by authority from the Son of God or his properly constituted representatives."—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 88. (Italics supplied.)

Christ's commission to His disciples, and thus to His church, in Matthew 28:18-20, does give authority to every true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ to "preach and expound" the Holy Scriptures. And it includes "divine authority" to do so, because it came direct from the lips of the Son of God, who was always divine, is now divine, and shall forever be divine. *There never was a time when Christ was not both divine and supreme.*

When the Saviour commanded His followers, "Go ye," He meant what He said. When at that same time He told them, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," He committed that power and authority to His church in the same way a general of an army commits or assigns a task to his army with authority to act as directed. Christ's commission and directions were positive and clear. They were to "teach *all* nations, baptizing them . . . : teaching them to observe all things . . . [which He had already] commanded" them. And that task was to continue without any break in His sustaining power and grace, "even unto the end of the world."

It is apparent that if the true church established by Jesus Christ and the apostles in the first century was

overcome and destroyed at a later date by instigation of Satan and earthly powers under his control, no one, Mormon or non-Mormon, would have reasonable grounds for believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Christ's parting words to His church were, "*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. . . . And, lo, I am with you *always, even unto the end of the world**" (Matt. 28:18-20). If it can be proved that Jesus, who spoke these words, was unable to fulfill them, that would be unquestionable evidence that He was not the Son of God come down from heaven to save us. But He has fulfilled His word!

The teaching that the church of Christ was wholly defeated during the Dark Ages is a thrust by Satan at the divine Sonship of Jesus Christ. And lest there be any question concerning the teaching of the LDS Church relative to this tenet, note this statement found on page 39 of the Introduction to volume 1 of its seven-volume *History of the Church*: "*Saddening as the thought may seem, the Church founded by the labors of Jesus and His Apostles was destroyed from the earth.*" (Italics supplied.)

In reply to the statement that "the Bible does not and cannot give to any man this right to exercise the functions of the priesthood," we answer that the Bible is the supreme source of all true doctrinal authority to the Christian world. Errors in doctrine held by any church body usually find their beginning in the minds of men who turn away from God's written Word and seek knowledge from other sources.

The apparent failure of the LDS Church to understand the sacrificial system carried on in the Old Testament tabernacle and temple services has no doubt led them to bring over into New Testament times a priesthood that ceased when Christ died.

In the time of Moses, the Lord instituted the Levitical, or Aaronic, priesthood, so called because the priests

were of the tribe of Levi, and Aaron, the brother of Moses, was its first high priest. The rites and ceremonies of this holy priesthood, which were to teach ancient Israel the way of God, typically pointed forward to Christ, the Lamb of God, who, after His substitutionary death, began to minister as our high priest in the temple of heaven (see Heb. 8:1-5).

The Aaronic priesthood, with its sacrifices and services, was annulled when Jesus died on the cross, and the temple itself was destroyed soon afterward. These symbolic services *met their fulfillment in Christ* when He shed His blood (see Matt. 26:28). This is clear from the New Testament book of Hebrews: "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?" (Heb. 7:11).

To hold that the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood is a part of Christ's church in any century this side of the cross is to deny the completeness of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it was prophesied that He would come into the world to "save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21), and to become "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1).

Jesus is not, and never was, a priest after the old order of Aaron. He was of the tribe of Judah, not of Levi. And when He, the antitypical Lamb of God, gave Himself on Calvary as a sacrifice for all mankind, the priesthood was then changed. The Aaronic priesthood then ceased, and Christ became our "High Priest." The apostle Paul explains, "For the priesthood *being changed*, there is made of necessity a change also of the law [the law of the priesthood, ceremonies, and sacrifices]. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the

altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (chap. 7:12-14).

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with God's law of ten commandments written on two tables of stone and saw the apostasy of the children of Israel, he called to the people, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me" (Ex. 32:26). Only the tribe of Levi had the courage to step forward in the defense of right. This tribe was appointed to serve at the tabernacle, but only *Aaron's family* was entrusted with the *priesthood*. The priests were all Levites, but not all of the Levites were priests.

The priestly office was reserved thereafter exclusively for Aaron and his descendants. Hence the name Aaronic priesthood. The Lord said to Moses, "And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazer and Ithamar, Aaron's sons" (chap. 28:1).

The Scriptures teach that in Old Testament times special mediatorial work was performed by these priests and their descendants in behalf of the repentant sinner. A lamb was slain as a sin offering, and the priest would sprinkle the blood about and upon the altar, in type making atonement for the sinner. The death of the lamb was symbolic of the atoning death of Jesus as the "Lamb of God." Christ was both the offering and the Offerer. "Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others" (Heb. 9:25).

Each time a lamb was presented as a sacrifice, the guilt of the transgressor was transferred, in figure, to the sacrificial animal. Then the animal was slain. The priest himself could not become an offering for sin, as

Christ did. The priest could not make an atonement for sin with his life, for he also was a sinner. The lamb brought by the sinner must always be "without blemish," thus typifying the perfect offering of Jesus Christ, the true Lamb. In this ceremonial act the penalty for sin was transferred to the innocent lamb, the sinner's immediate substitute. Through this offering, then, man looked forward by faith to Christ, the antitypical Lamb, and to the blood of Christ, which would truly atone for his and all men's sins.

By transgression man was cut off from God. But the atonement made by Christ erected a "bridge" over which the sinner could again travel and find communion with his Saviour and his God.

The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross satisfied the justice of God. Those who believe in Him, acknowledging their guilt to Him, may receive full pardon for their sins; His atoning blood makes possible the pardon of all their sins. But we must *accept* His sacrifice for us. The Redeemer does not force Himself upon anyone.

What further meaning was there, and is there, in all this for us today? For the Old Testament believer, it foretold a Redeemer and High Priest *to come*. For the New Testament follower, and for *all* men since Christ died on the cross, it presents Him as the Messiah, "the mediator of a better covenant," a "high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:6, 1, 2).

This "true tabernacle" was and is *in heaven*, and was the "pattern" after which the "worldly sanctuary" was built by Moses. Its priests "serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the

pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Heb. 8:5). "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary" (chap. 9:1).

Now, inasmuch as at the death of Christ the priesthood was "changed" ("For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" [Heb. 7:12]), we ask, What is this change in "priesthood," and "of the law"?

First, "if therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?" (chap. 7:11).

When type met antitype in the death of Jesus on the cross, *there was no more need for the mediatorial work of earthly priests, Aaron's descendants, in offering animal sacrifices*. Paul verifies this: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, *can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect*. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law" (chap. 10:1-8).

Continuing, the apostle Paul wrote concerning

Christ: "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. *He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.* By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all.* And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered *one sacrifice for sins for ever*, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever* them that are sanctified" (verses 9-14).

At Jesus' redemptive death on the cross type met antitype, thus *annulling* the sacrificial system, and thereby *ending forever* any need for either a continuing of earthly animal sacrifices or for any "restoration" of Aaron's priesthood. The Temple services ceased at the death of our Saviour, for we read: "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, *the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom*; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent" (Matt. 27:50, 51).

In rending the veil of the Temple "from the *top* to the bottom," as if by God's own hand, thus revealing to the eyes of everyone the "Holiest of all" (Heb. 9:3), the Lord signified the ending of the Aaronic priesthood. Its foreshadowing work was completed. *No longer would it be an active teaching agency in the plan of salvation.* In Christ, the "shadow" met the real, and was swallowed up in Him who said, "I come." "He [Jesus] taketh away the first [the mediatorial work of the Aaronic priesthood], that he may establish the second," His own mediatorial work as our true high priest (chap. 10:9).

Because Jesus was of the tribe of Judah, and not of Levi, He was of necessity made a high priest "after the order of Melchisedec." Note the words of the apostle Paul: "And it is yet far more evident: for that after the

similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (chap. 7:15-17). The apostle further explains: "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: *We have such an high priest*, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (chap. 8:1, 2).

Since His ascension, Christ has opened to all men "a new and living way" (chap. 10:20), for He could not be a priest while on earth. But God, "with an oath," declared Jesus to be "a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec," to serve "in the heavens" (chap. 7:21; 8:1).

Of a certainty, we can now see that the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood *cannot* be held by any man since the death of Christ. And what does the Bible say concerning the Melchizedek priesthood?

Who, according to the Bible, was Melchizedek? The author of Hebrews describes him: "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils" (verses 1-4).

But what does Joseph Fielding Smith bring to us regarding these Bible verses? We read:

"Many Christian teachers have been greatly puzzled because of the reference in the Book of Hebrews to

Melchizedek. *Bible* commentators have scratched their heads and reached false conclusions trying to solve the mystery. It was not Melchizedek who was without father and without mother and without beginning of days or end of life, but it was the priesthood which he held. The proper reading of this scripture is as follows:

“‘For this Melchizedek was ordained a priest after the order of the Son of God, which *order* was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life. *And all those who are ordained unto this priesthood are made like unto the Son of God, abiding a priest continually.*’”—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, pp. 82, 83.

Smith was quoting Hebrews 7:3 as found in the “Inspired Version”—thus named because LDS Prophet Joseph Smith is said to have corrected many texts found in the King James Version, which, he claimed, had not been translated correctly by Bible scholars.* Mormonism’s claim regarding the “Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood” is recorded in *Essentials in Church History*, by Joseph Fielding Smith, published by The Deseret Book Co., Twenty-seventh Edition, 1974 rev., pp. 57, 58:

“While translating, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery discovered that the question of baptism for the remission of sins was mentioned several times in the record. This caused them to marvel, for the doctrine of baptism was misunderstood in the world. They concluded to inquire of the Lord for light. On the 15th day of May, 1829, they retired to the woods and prayed for instruction on this question. While [they were] thus engaged in prayer a heavenly messenger descended in a

* This “Inspired Version,” printed by the Herald Publishing House, Independence, Missouri, is not officially a possession of the Latter-day Saint Church located in Salt Lake City, but is copyrighted by The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which has its headquarters in Independence, Missouri.

cloud of light and said that he was John, known as John the Baptist in the New Testament. He said he acted under the direction of Peter, James and John, who held the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and had been sent to confer on Joseph and Oliver the Aaronic Priesthood, which holds the keys of the temporal Gospel. He laid his hands upon their heads and said:

“Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the Gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.”

“He stated that the *Melchizedek Priesthood* would soon be conferred upon them and that Joseph Smith should be called the first and Oliver Cowdery the second elder of the Church.

“JOSEPH AND OLIVER BAPTIZED.—This messenger, after conferring the Priesthood, instructed Joseph and Oliver to go down into the water and baptize each other. After which they were to lay hands upon each other and re-confer the Priesthood which he had bestowed upon them. There are two reasons why they should be commanded to do this thing. First, to confer the Priesthood before baptism is contrary to the order of the organized Church, therefore they were commanded to confer the Priesthood upon each other in the regular way; after they were baptized. Second, the angel did for them that which they could not do for themselves. *There was no one living in mortality who held the keys of this Priesthood, therefore it was necessary that this messenger, who held the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood in the Dispensation of the Meridian of Time, should be sent to confer this power.* It is contrary to the order of heaven for those who have passed beyond the veil to officiate and labor for the living on the earth,

only wherein mortal man cannot act, and thereby it becomes necessary for those who have passed through the resurrection to act for them. Otherwise John would have followed the regular order, which is practiced in the Church, and would have first baptized Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and then conferred upon them the Aaronic Priesthood.

“As the angel had commanded them, they repaired to the water where Joseph first baptized Oliver and then Oliver baptized Joseph. Immediately after coming out of the water they experienced great and glorious blessings, and being filled with the Holy Spirit, began to prophesy of the coming forth of the Church and the establishment of the great work of the Lord in the latter days. Their minds were now enlightened and the scriptures were opened to their understandings. *For the first time in many centuries there now stood on the earth men with power to officiate in baptism for the remission of sin.*

“The fear of opposition compelled them to keep secret the matter of their ordination and baptism, except where they revealed it to a few personal friends, whom they could trust.” (Italics supplied.)

In that lengthy statement we have read a comprehensive Mormon claim that the Aaronic Priesthood was restored through young Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Note the claim that “*for the first time in many centuries there now stood on the earth men with power to officiate in baptism for the remission of sin.*”

But did the Lord restore the Aaronic Priesthood to this world through John the Baptist on May 15, 1829? Such an act could not have been in God’s plan, for His plan called for the termination of the first priesthood [Aaronic] at the death of His Son, and the inauguration of the second [Melchizedek] through His Son after His resurrection and ascension. We have further proof of this in the following verses: “That at that time ye were

without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but *now in Christ Jesus* ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; *having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances*; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body *by the cross*, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:12-18).

Finally, the apostle emphasizes, "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; *blotting out the handwriting of ordinances* [part of which was the Aaronic or Levitical system of sacrifices] that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, *nailing it to his cross*; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:13-15).

We shall now briefly trace the history of Melchizedek and the Old Testament prophecy concerning Christ's becoming our high priest.

Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek: "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he [Abraham] gave him [Melchizedek] tithes of all" (Gen. 14:18-20).

Melchizedek is not mentioned again until David recorded the prophecy that the apostle Paul quoted: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4).

This is the "oath" mentioned by Paul (Heb. 7:20, 21) by which Jesus, who was of the tribe of Judah and not of the tribe of Levi, was proclaimed to be our true and our *only* high priest.

After speaking in Hebrews 7:23 of "many priests" who "were not suffered to continue by reason of death," the writer declared in unmistakable language: "But this man [Jesus, cf. verse 22], *because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood*" (verse 24).

Other translations render verse 24: "But He, because He continues for ever, *has a priesthood which does not pass to any successor*" (Weymouth). "He holds his *priesthood without any successor*, since he continues for ever" (Moffatt). "But he holds his priesthood *permanently*, because he continues for ever" (R.S.V.). "But he continues forever, and so *his priesthood is untransferable*" (Goodspeed).

Like a great searchlight, God's priesthood, the Melchizedek, focuses not on a large number of men, each of whom may believe he has become the recipient of the Melchizedek priesthood of the Lord. It shines on only One, One who stands unique, in that there is not a man in all the earth of whom it can be truly spoken, as it is of Christ, that he is "holy, harmless, undefiled" (verse 26); blameless, unstained by sin (Amplified).

Now, we know that in Old Testament times erring, mortal men were called to serve in the Aaronic priesthood, and officiated in the sacred work of the temple of God on behalf of Israel. But can sinful, mortal man be exalted to the priesthood to which only the matchless Christ was called, to the priesthood "*which does not pass to*

any successor," which is "untransferable," "which passeth *not* from one to another"?

From this we know for a certainty that Paul was speaking of Christ when he mentioned that "another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec," and that He would "*not* be called after the order of Aaron" (verse 11). Verses 13 through 17 continue the clarification, with no possibility for misunderstanding: "For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an *endless life*. For he [God] testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

These words indicate the true change of priesthood from the Levitical to the Melchizedek, and the "change also of the law" (verse 12), from the Levitical priests who were called "after the law of a carnal commandment" and were subject to death, to our Lord Jesus Christ, "who is made . . . after the power of an *endless life*."

It is for this reason that Paul exclaimed: "He [Jesus] is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he *ever liveth* to make intercession for them" (verse 25). The apostle knew that every repentant soul had a Saviour, an Advocate, a Mediator "of a better hope" (verse 19), and that no longer did anyone need to approach God through "priests . . . [who] were not suffered to continue by reason of death" (verse 23). He recognized the glorious truth that each individual now may have "a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God" (chap. 4:14), that He has all power and divine authority to represent us every moment of every day, as long as life

shall last. He is our interceding Friend at court, who “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (verse 15).

Jesus, the Son of God, is our High Priest because God declared Him so: “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (chap. 5:6).

In all the Holy Bible, there is not one passage indicating the possibility that any person other than the Lord Jesus Christ has been, is, or ever shall be appointed as high priest after the order of the Melchizedek priesthood. No mortal man meets all of God's specifications. *Only Christ, our eternal Redeemer, does.* No man anywhere on the face of the earth qualifies, for “as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10).

Chapters 5 to 10 of the book of Hebrews clearly present the two priesthoods and their true application.

Never should we forget that Jesus was made a “high priest *for ever* after the order of Melchisedec” (Heb. 6:20). Scripture emphasizes this point many times over.

As our high priest, the Lord Jesus is “a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (chap. 8:2). And this “sanctuary” or “true tabernacle” is “in the heavens” (verse 1). It is “the temple of God . . . in heaven” (Rev. 11:19). It is not an earthly temple.

Christ, as our high priest, ministering in behalf of every true Christian follower, has entered “into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 9:24).

Christ's priestly ministry as advocate is like that of an attorney in an earthly court, pleading in behalf of his client for pardon. The Saviour is our divine Attorney, pleading the case of all who ask Him to defend them in the temple courts above. The only “retaining fee” He requires is honest repentance, commitment, and full

confession of our sins. He is the One of whom John the Beloved wrote: "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

This same Jesus, as He has ministered in heaven for repentant sinners over the past nineteen centuries, still accomplishes a full and complete work as advocate, and His priestly ministry includes "the whole world" (verse 2). No person who has ever lived on the earth was, or ever shall be, outside the ministry of our great High Priest if that person wills to be included within the circle of God's love. For "he [Jesus] is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Heb. 7:25). And it is for this very reason—that Jesus is "able to save . . . to the uttermost"—that God declared Him "an high priest for ever." Therefore, the divinely appointed ministry of the Saviour for man is comprehensive enough to care for the needs of *all* men.

When the Bible is accepted as supreme, with full confidence in its excellence and divine authorship, what happens to Mormonism's priesthood and *authority*? The answer becomes clear as this statement is pondered:

"Priesthood is divine authority which is conferred upon men that they may officiate in the ordinances of the gospel. In other words, *priesthood is a part of God's own power*, which he bestows upon his chosen servants that they may act in his name in proclaiming the gospel and officiating in all the ordinances thereof. All such official acts performed by these duly authorized servants are recognized by the Author of our salvation.

"*Man cannot act legally in the name of the Lord unless he is vested with the priesthood, which is divine authority.* No man has the power or the right to take this honor to himself. Unless he is called of God, as was Aaron, he has no authority to officiate in any of the ordinances of the gospel; should he do so his act is not valid or recognized in the heavens. The Lord has said his house is a house of

order, and he has given the commandment that no man shall come unto the Father but by his divine law which is established in the heavens.”—Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, pp. 80, 81.

The LDS Church often questions the authority of others who proclaim the gospel. They have frequently inquired of ordained ministers of other persuasions, “Upon what authority do you accept ordination as a minister of the gospel, to teach and to preach?”

But now we must turn this inquiry back to every Mormon questioner: If the priesthood—both Aaronic and Melchizedek—is Mormonism’s authority to officiate for God, as stated by President Smith, then where is your authority? The answer is simple. Mormonism has none. The Aaronic priesthood is not valid this side of the cross; and the Melchizedek priesthood *belongs only to Christ*. From Christ’s day to our day, it has *not* passed “from one to another.”

Here we have it in logical sequence: since the true church and the gospel of Christ were *not* taken from the earth, there has been no need for a “restoration.” If there has been no restoration of the church, no priesthood has been restored. Since the Aaronic priesthood ceased at the death of Christ on the cross, and only Jesus Himself today holds the Melchizedek priesthood, then Mormonism has no divine authority based on its claim to such priesthoods. And if there is no divine authority, then what of the story of Joseph Smith?

Joseph Fielding Smith states it clearly: “Mormonism, as it is called, must *stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith*. He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he was one of the biggest frauds this world has ever seen. *There is no middle ground.*”—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 188.

We have been making an honest and thorough in-

vestigation—actually a “rigid examination”—of Mormonism, as recommended by Apostle Orson Pratt. This examination has been made under the powerful searchlight of divine truth, which truth is forcefully outlined in the pages of the Bible.

Now, if the *Book of Mormon* itself sustains the LDS teaching that the priesthood would “be restored in the last days,” do we not have even more evidence that the *Book of Mormon* must be held in question? Joseph Fielding Smith helps to answer this for us:

“JOSEPH SMITH TESTIFIES OF PRIESTHOOD RESTORATION. In this statement, made by Oliver [Cowdery], reference is made to a prophecy by Joseph of old, son of Jacob, in which he declared that the priesthood should be restored in the last days through the administration of an angel ‘in the bush.’ In the *Book of Mormon* we are given a glimpse at the prophecy by Joseph concerning the restoration, but the prophecy has only been given in part unto us, and is yet to be revealed. Without doubt, it was made known to the Prophet in connection with many other things which have not yet been given to the world. The Prophet has, however, added some light concerning this prophecy, and has revealed to us the manner of the ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood of himself and Oliver Cowdery.

“On the 18th day of December, 1833, when the Prophet blessed his father and ordained him to the Patriarchal Priesthood, he also blessed a number of others, among whom was Oliver Cowdery. After pronouncing Oliver’s blessing, the Prophet said:

“‘These blessings shall come upon him [Oliver] according to the blessings of the prophecy of Joseph in ancient days, which he said should come upon the seer of the last days and the scribe that should sit with him, and that should be ordained with him, *by the hands of the angel in the bush*, unto the *lesser* priesthood, and *after*

receive the holy priesthood *under the hands* of those who had been held in reserve for a long season, *even those who received it under the hands of the Messiah*, while he should dwell in the flesh upon the earth, and should receive the blessings with him, even the seer of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saith he, even Joseph of old.'

"This blessing was also recorded in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery, and was copied by him in the record on the 2nd day of October, 1835, in the city of Kirtland, Ohio, and having been written by an eye-witness of the fulfilment, is certainly strong proof of the ordination. Whether this is the 'other place' mentioned by Oliver, where the account of the ordination to the *Melchizedek* Priesthood is recorded is a question. If not, the account of the ordination is either lost or misplaced among the many papers in possession of the Church.

"John the Baptist was not ordained to the priesthood by the hand of Messiah, as he received his ordination when eight days of age, under the hands of an angel. Peter, James, and John were called by the Savior and received their authority from him; and the prophecy of Joseph was fulfilled when they conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery the keys of the High Priesthood which they had received from Messiah while in the flesh."—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 100-102. (Italics his.)

Now, what was it that Apostle Orson Pratt told us? Here it is again: "The nature of the message in the *Book of Mormon* is such that, *if true, no one can possibly be saved and reject it; if false, no one can possibly be saved and receive it.*" Commenting on these words, Joseph Fielding Smith wrote, "This statement by Elder Pratt certainly is fair enough. *All down through our history, the Latter-day Saints have been willing to stand or fall by the logic of this thesis.*"—*The Restoration of All Things*, pp. 86, 87. (Italics supplied.)

There is another Mormon claim that should be

carefully investigated:

"The President of the [LDS] Church holds the keys over all the Church. *In him is concentrated the power of the priesthood. . . .*

"We are taught that the new and everlasting covenant of the gospel embraces the fulness of the gospel—every covenant, contract, bond, obligation, vow, authority—and that the keys of this authority are held by the President of the Church, who is president of the High Priesthood, 'and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred' (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 132:7)."—Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, p. 135. (Italics supplied.)

Now, note these further declarations by Joseph Fielding Smith:

"KEYS CENTER IN CHURCH PRESIDENT. I wish we could get it firmly fixed in our minds that only one man upon the face of the earth at a time holds, in their fulness, the powers, the keys, the authorities, of this glorious priesthood. The man who holds these keys by virtue of his right, that right which God himself has vested in him, has the right to *delegate* authority and to *withdraw* authority as he sees fit and receives inspiration so to do.

"No man, *I do not care who he is or how much priesthood he holds, has any right to officiate in any ordinance of this gospel for any soul contrary to the sanction and the approval of the man who holds the keys of authority in this Church.* Now the Lord has told us that.

"The priesthood is concentrated, centered if you please, in one man, and it radiates from him, so far as the Church is concerned upon the face of the earth, just as it radiates from Jesus Christ to him. He has the right to speak, to give counsel, to say what we shall do and what we shall not do by virtue of the priesthood, and he who goes contrary to that counsel is under condemna-

tion in the sight of God.

“CANNOT USE PRIESTHOOD WITHOUT KEYS. I have no right, there is no man upon the face of this earth who has the right to go forth and administer in *any* of the ordinances of this gospel unless the President of the Church, who holds the keys, sanctions it. He has given us authority; he has put the sealing power in our priesthood, because he holds those keys; and if the President of the Church should say to us, ‘You shall not baptize in this state or in that state, or in this nation,’ any man that would go forth to baptize contrary to that command would be violating a command of God and going contrary to authority and power; *and that which he did would not be sealed.* . . .

“All this authority radiates from the President of the Church. The President of this Church could say, if the Lord gave him that inspiration, that we shall not preach the gospel any more in the New England states, or in the United States, or in Europe, and there would not be an elder in this Church that would have any authority, notwithstanding his priesthood, to go into any place where he had been forbidden to go and preach the gospel, if the President of the Church *withdrew* the authority.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 135-137.

The Son of God gave His true followers on earth certain delegated powers to act in His name: to teach, to preach, to organize, to baptize, et cetera. But nowhere in the Scriptures do we read that Christ relinquished to any one human being the “power” given Him by His Father (see Matt. 28:18).

Surely we cannot, nor should the LDS Church, accept Christ’s conversation with Peter (chap. 16:15-19) as an example of His delegating to “one man” His power to “bind” or “loose,” for would we not then be obliged to accept also Roman Catholicism’s claim of tracing its succession of popes back to Peter as the first pope,

through the use of these same verses? The apostle Paul clarifies this: "That Rock was Christ," he wrote (1 Cor. 10:4). Jesus Christ Himself was, and is, "the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20). It is Christ, the Son of God, whom the apostle Paul declared to be "the *head of the body, the church*" (Col. 1:18), not the vascillating Peter.

Now we present the following from Joseph Fielding Smith:

"MODERN SONS OF AARON AND LEVI. Who are the sons of Aaron and Levi today? They are, by virtue of the blessings of the Almighty, those who are ordained by those who hold the authority to officiate in the offices of the priesthood. It is written that those so ordained become the sons of Moses and of Aaron. Also: 'And the sons of Moses and of Aaron shall be filled with the glory of the Lord, upon Mount Zion in the Lord's house, *whose sons are ye*; and also many whom I have called and sent forth to build up my Church' (*Doctrines and Covenants*, 84:32). So the Lord has spoken, and this was said to *those who held the Melchizedek Priesthood*.

"OFFERING OF THE SONS OF LEVI. What kind of offering will the sons of Levi make to fulfil the words of Malachi and John? Logically such a sacrifice as they were authorized to make in the days of their former ministry when they were first called. Will such a sacrifice be offered in the temple? Evidently not in any temple as they are constructed for work of salvation and exaltation today. It should be remembered that the great temple, which is yet to be built in the City Zion, will not be one edifice, but twelve. Some of these temples will be for the lesser priesthood.

"When these temples are built, it is very likely that provision will be made for some ceremonies and ordinances which may be performed by the Aaronic Priesthood and a place provided where the sons of Levi may offer their offering in righteousness. This will have

to be the case because *all things are to be restored*. There were ordinances performed in ancient Israel in the tabernacle when in the wilderness, and after it was established at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, and later in the temple built by Solomon. The Lord has informed us that this was the case and has said that in those edifices ordinances for the people were performed.

“These temples that we now have, however, the Lord commanded to be built for the purpose of giving to the saints the blessings which belong to their exaltation, blessings which are to prepare those who receive them to ‘enter into his rest, . . . which rest is the fulness of his glory,’ and these ordinances have to be performed by authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which the sons of Levi did not hold.

“RESTORATION OF BLOOD SACRIFICES. We are living in the dispensation of the fulness of times into which all things are to be gathered, and *all things* are to be restored since the beginning. Even this earth is to be restored to the condition which prevailed before Adam’s transgression. Now in the nature of things, the law of sacrifice will have to be restored, or *all things* which were decreed by the Lord would not be restored. It will be necessary, therefore, for the sons of Levi, who offered the blood sacrifices anciently in Israel, to offer such a sacrifice again to round out and complete this ordinance in this dispensation. Sacrifice by the shedding of blood was instituted in the days of Adam and of necessity will have to be restored. [Italics his.]

“*The sacrifice of animals will be done to complete the restoration when the temple spoken of is built; at the beginning of the millennium, or in the restoration, blood sacrifices will be performed long enough to complete the fulness of the restoration in this dispensation. Afterwards sacrifice will be of some other character.*”—*Ibid.*, pp. 93, 94. (Italics supplied.)

Does this teaching of Mormonism, that animal sacrifices are someday to be “restored,” indicate that the LDS Church does not fully accept the atonement of Jesus Christ? We trust not. Does not the true church of Jesus Christ believe that He was the Lamb of God who died for all, “in whom we have redemption through his blood” (Eph. 1:7)? The Scriptures further exclaim: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18, 19).

And the Bible also declares: “By the which will *we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same *sacrifices, which can never take away sins*: but this man [Jesus Christ], after he had offered *one sacrifice for sins for ever*, sat down on the right hand of God. . . . For by *one offering* he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:10-14).

Here we would ask, Do Mormonism’s three books, the *Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, and the *Pearl of Great Price*, which the LDS Church declares to be a part of divine Scripture, explicitly uphold the belief that both priesthoods, Aaronic and Melchizedek, are still a part of the gospel this side of the cross?

Note this from the *Book of Mormon*: “This high priesthood [Melchizedek] being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things—now they were ordained after this manner—being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end—thus they become

high priests forever, after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth. And thus it is. Amen.”—Alma 13:7-9. (See *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, pp. 82, 83; cf. Hebrews 7:3 in the *Inspired Version* [LDS] and the King James Version.)

Next, we present a statement from the *Doctrine and Covenants*: “For whoso is faithful *unto the obtaining these two priesthoods* [the Aaronic and the Melchizedek] of which I have spoken, and the magnifying of their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.”—Sec. 84:33.

The *Pearl of Great Price* also declares: “Now *this same Priesthood*, which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also.”—Moses 6:7. Again: “And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they *shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations*.”—Abraham 2:9.

Surely this brings us to a place of personal decision.

In this chapter, we have given an honest and fair presentation, directly from LDS authoritative sources, on that church’s claims to sole possession of the priesthood and authority of God on the earth today.

Now, we ask, Is there a priesthood having to do with Christ’s church on the earth today? We answer, Yes! But, it is *not* a priesthood *possessed by any one church body*. It is for everyone made in the likeness of God—every person who will accept it in “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Rev. 14:6). John the revelator declared, “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, *and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father*; to him be

glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (chap. 1:5, 6).

Every one who genuinely believes in and follows our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is accepted into the priesthood of Christ, for we read, "But ye are a chosen generation, *a royal priesthood*, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, we may become members of the royal family of heaven. "And made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:6, R.S.V.).

The *New English Bible* states it thus: "To him who loves us and freed us from our sins with his life's blood, who made of us a royal house, to serve as *the priests of his God and Father*—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen" (verses 5, 6).

To this "priesthood," and to this priesthood only, are the members of the human family elected. God's "royal priesthood" is for "whosoever" believes in Christ. It is not an Aaronic priesthood "restored." It is a priesthood *bestowed*. It is a priesthood of believers *made available through Christ the Lord* to every man, woman, and youth in every age, in every century. Throughout the past six millenniums of time the God of heaven has held out His invitation to all men to become members of His royal family! The Lord's invitation has always been, "Come" (chap. 22:17). "If *any* man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink," Jesus said (John 7:37). There is no restriction here for any period of time, for any people, or for any place in all the world.

How beautiful is the Lord's description of those who make up His "royal priesthood." Coming to Christ, the "living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of

God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. . . . But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in *time past were not a people*, but are *now the people of God*: which had not obtained mercy, but *now have obtained mercy*" (1 Peter 2:4-10).

In every nation on the face of the earth, those who accept Christ's sacrifice for them become not only a "royal priesthood" but "a peculiar people," "lively stones" in God's "spiritual house." The term "peculiar people" does not mean what it has come to mean most commonly. It means a distinctive people, a purchased people, redeemed by the "precious blood" of the Saviour of all mankind.

Now, if God's people are "priests," there must be a sacrifice that they are to offer up before God. The apostle Paul specifies just such a sacrifice: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a *living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). Again: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:15, 16).

The great God of the universe is calling for a "holy" sacrifice, a "living sacrifice," a "sacrifice of praise." He is the God of living human beings who are willing to offer themselves on the altar of sacrifice. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:32). When we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, He touches us with His mighty transforming power, and through Christ we are made "holy, acceptable unto God."

Since Christ's death on Calvary this is the only true and acceptable priesthood *on earth*. The New Testament reveals no other earthly priesthood.

I plead with everyone who reads these words to accept the redeeming power of the greatest of all sacrifices—the only perfect sacrifice—in the person of Jesus Christ, the pure Lamb of God, who died for you and for me.

Those who are of the “royal priesthood” of God have been gloriously called “out of darkness into his [Christ's] marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9). By accepting the gift of everlasting life “through Jesus Christ our Lord,” they may “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

May God help each of us to renew our covenant with Christ Jesus, our great High Priest in the sanctuary above, who longs to be advocate and intercessor for everyone born into this world. And to you who may never have offered your all to the One who has done so much for you, I appeal with all my heart that you may do so now.

Chapter 7

MORMONISM'S DOCTRINE OF THE DEAD

The nondestructibility of the human spirit as proclaimed by the LDS Church is one of their most important doctrines. It follows that we cannot overemphasize the significance of a correct understanding of this teaching.

Two brief statements from Mormonism's "chief doctrinal authority" will clearly summarize the LDS Church's belief on this subject:

1. "*The spirit of man is eternal and cannot die in the sense of ceasing to exist.*"—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, p. 218.

2. "In His great mercy, love, and justice, our Father in heaven has provided that *all* His children who have gained mortality shall live again. *The soul cannot be destroyed.* The spirits of all men are eternal. They lived before this mortal life came, and through the atonement of Jesus Christ, they shall live after this mortal life is ended."—*Ibid.*, p. 274.

We shall now compare these LDS teachings with Christ's own words found in the Bible's most widely quoted verse: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). These words are unmistakable in their meaning and they proclaim to all mankind two opposite conse-

quences: either we believe in Jesus and thus "have everlasting life," or we do not believe in Him and thus shall "perish." The Greek term from which this is translated means "to utterly destroy," "to blot out," "to vanish into nothingness." The end of all unrepentant sinners, and of Satan himself, will be to perish.

The apostle Paul presents the two exact opposites in one verse, just as Jesus does: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). This death is not merely "natural" death as found in this present world, but the second death (Rev. 20:6), which is eternal, from which there shall be no resurrection.

Logic leads us to conclude that as long as sin goes on, death will result. When sin and death cease to exist, those whom God has judged righteous will dwell with Him and will have "everlasting life." And God's Book tells of a day when death itself shall be no more: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. *This is the second death.* And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (verses 14, 15).

Our heavenly Father loves even those who have fallen into sin, "for God so loved the world." But He and His Son, Jesus Christ, have always hated sin. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity," Habakkuk said of God (Hab. 1:13). And the Father said to the Son, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Heb. 1:9). This hatred for sin is a basic reason for Christ's coming into this world, "that through death he might *destroy* him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (chap. 2:14). The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world and "took part of" our "flesh and blood . . . that through *déath*" He might redeem from Satan's

power all who would turn to Him. *There is no other way to enter into eternal life.*

We have seen that the fate of those who refuse to accept Jesus is to perish, and that the “wages of sin is death.” Let us now go further, and ask: Does the Bible teach that the “spirit of man is eternal and cannot die”?

In the Bible the terms translated “spirit,” as related to man, are the Hebrew word *rûach* and the Greek word *pneuma*. The root meaning of both words is “breeze,” “wind,” and so, “breath.” By extension, the terms mean “life principle.” Both words are translated “spirit” more than any other term.

The word *rûach* is used 379 times in the Old Testament, but in not one of these cases does it denote an intelligent entity that is capable of an existence apart from the physical body, as far as man is concerned. The same observation applies to *pneuma*. The word itself contains absolutely no suggestion that it means a conscious entity capable of existence separate from the physical body. Nor does the Biblical usage support any such idea. That concept is based on preconceived ideas, but we must derive our understanding of the nature of man from the Bible. There is no other authoritative source.

Now, we ask: According to the Bible, what happens to this “spirit” at death?

And we get this reply: “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (Eccl. 12:7). The spirit spoken of here is the life principle, the character, the personal identity, that God gives to a person at birth, and which leaves the body at death and returns to the Creator of all. All the medical and scientific investigators of all ages have never been able to discover the secret of life. This secret, God has never revealed to man. Satan may simulate life, but he cannot produce it. It is in the hand of our Maker.

Were it not for the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ there would be no hope for anyone who has died or who will yet suffer death (see 1 Cor. 15:12-18). The apostle Paul's hope was fixed on the resurrection of the righteous dead, made possible by Jesus' resurrection. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: . . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:8-11).

Let us review Christ's teaching, which we find so clearly defined in His conversation with His disciples after hearing that His friend Lazarus had died: "He saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead" (John 11:11-14). Then He said, "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him" (verse 15).

The Saviour had purposely remained away from His sick friend Lazarus, for we read in verses 5 and 6: "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was." One purpose was "that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (verse 4). How, we may ask, could Jesus be glorified by the death of Lazarus?

Perhaps the most obvious reason would be that Christ's mighty power as the Life-giver, the Restorer of life, be demonstrated, proving Him to be "the resurrection, and the life" (verse 25). He would thus present proof that many of those who sleep in the grave shall

someday come forth at His call. How could one read the story of the resurrection of Lazarus, who “had lain in the grave four days” (verse 17), and still doubt that Christ has power to raise the dead? Here was a perfect demonstration of what will happen to all who are “dead in Christ” at the second coming of the Lord (see 1 Thess. 4:16). At that day all the faithful who have ever lived, from Adam’s time down to the present, will come forth from their graves, even as did Lazarus.

However, the resurrection of those who have died “in Christ” will be more glorious than was that of Lazarus. They “shall be raised incorruptible” (1 Cor. 15:52), with the full bloom of immortality, never again to be subject to death, as was Lazarus after he was raised. At the second advent of Jesus to this earth it will be “the Lord himself [who] shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thess. 4:16).

The Saviour’s desire was that the resurrection of Lazarus would kindle faith and hope in the heart of every one who would believe in Him—faith and hope in His promise of a life that shall never cease. All tears occasioned by sorrow and pain “God shall wipe away . . . from their eyes; and there shall be no more death” (Rev. 21:4). The Lord will then say, “The former things are passed away,” and, “Behold, I make all things new” (verse 5).

When Jesus said “Lazarus is dead” He was confirming the great Bible truth that death, which is cessation of life, may be likened to being unconscious in sleep, and that the condition will remain until the resurrection day, when His own voice shall sound around the earth to call forth the righteous dead “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor. 15:52).

Death is referred to by Paul as a sleep four times in

chapter 15 of his first letter to the Corinthians: "After that, he [Jesus] was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are *fallen asleep*"; "Then they also which are *fallen asleep* in Christ are perished"; "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them *that slept*"; "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all *sleep*, but we shall all be changed" (verses 6, 18, 20, 51).

All of life's joys and problems are no more for him who rests in "the sleep of death" (Ps. 13:3), either to encourage or to trouble him. This is simply stated by Solomon: "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun. . . . Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:5-10).

Such was the condition of Lazarus while he lay in the tomb four days. He had no cognizance of the conversation between his two sisters and their Lord. While lying asleep in death, his love for his sisters, Mary and Martha, and for his Saviour-Friend, had "perished," for "the dead know not any thing." Had Jesus not called him to life again, his love for Christ and his sisters would not have been restored until the great resurrection day (see John 6:40, 54).

The Bible plainly teaches that there are to be two separate resurrections—the resurrection of the righteous (or the just), and the resurrection of the unrighteous (or the unjust). Jesus' own words make this plain: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and

shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28, 29).

From Revelation 20:4-6, we learn that these two resurrections will be 1,000 years apart. The first resurrection (that of the righteous) will take place at the second coming of Jesus; the second resurrection (that of the wicked) will occur at the close of the great millennial period.

In speaking of the righteous and the wicked, Mormonism says: "It is the righteous who go to paradise. It is the righteous who cease from those things that trouble. Not so with the wicked. They remain in torment. They have their anguish of soul intensified, if you please, when they get on the other side, because they are constantly recalling to mind their evil deeds. They are aware of their neglected opportunities, privileges in which they might have served the Lord and received a reward of restfulness instead of a reward of punishment. And so they remain in torment until the time comes for their deliverance. . . .

"The righteous, those who have kept the commandments of the Lord, are not shut up in any such place, but are in happiness in paradise. They cease from all this trouble, and trial, and tribulation, and anguish of soul. They are free from all these torments, because they have been true and faithful to their covenants."—*Ibid.*, pp. 229, 230.

Jesus did not call back a living being from a "place of departed spirits" when He restored Lazarus to life. Lazarus had been asleep in the tomb (see John 11:11-14, 17, 38-44).

If, immediately after dying, Lazarus had found himself "in happiness in paradise," in full consciousness of his whereabouts, knowing that he had now ceased "from all this trouble, and trial, and tribulation, and

anguish of soul," it must have been a great disappointment rather than a joy for him to be called back to earth again. This must also have been true in at least six other instances in which the dead were brought back to life at the word of the Saviour or one of His apostles. You will remember Tabitha, more commonly known as Dorcas, who lived at Joppa. "This woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did" (Acts 9:36). Then she became sick, and died.

The believers in Joppa heard that Peter was in Lydda, a town not far away. So they sent two men to ask that he come to them without delay. "When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive" (verses 39-41).

Then there was the young man of the city of Nain who had died. He was the son of a widow. Christ had compassion on her and resurrected her son, as related in Luke 7. According to Mormon teaching, he, too, was brought back from the "happiness" he was just beginning to find "in paradise."

Also, there is the case of the Shunammite's son, the story of which is found in 2 Kings 4; of the son of the widow of Zarephath, as told in 1 Kings 17; of the daughter of Jairus, recounted in Luke 8; and of Eutychus, in Acts 20:9-12.

Are we to believe that all of these, and perhaps others not named in the Scriptures, were recalled from "paradise" to renew their struggle with the troubles, trials, and heartaches of this evil world?

You will recall the care that God took to place cherubim “at the east of the garden of Eden . . . to keep the way of the tree of life” (Gen. 3:24). Here is additional evidence that God’s plan did not include immortal sinners. Of this we are certain, for it was after Adam and Eve had disobeyed God, and had thus become subject to death, that the Lord set a guard about the tree of life so that they could not eat of it and thus *become immortal sinners*.

The Bible plainly teaches that unrepentant sinners who have died are *not* now being punished for their transgressions. Their punishment is still in the future. According to 2 Peter 2:4 even the evil angels are “reserved unto judgment.” In verse 9 we read, “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” They are *reserved* to receive their punishment at a future time. They are not now being punished.

In Psalm 37 we read that “evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (verses 9-11). “But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away” (verse 20).

These verses show that there is no place in eternity for the sinner, either inside the city of God, or in any other place in the universe. “For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall *burn them up*, saith the Lord of hosts, *that it shall leave them neither root nor branch*” (Mal. 4:1). Satan is the root; the wicked are the branches.

The Bible teaches that there are the just and the unjust, the good and the evil, the righteous and the wicked. It declares plainly that "the wages of sin is death"; that "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

At death, the righteous go to their graves, as do all men. They will live again. But they will have life and live with Jesus only *after* they are raised from the dead. While asleep in the tomb, the child of God knows nothing. Time matters not to him. A year, a hundred years, a thousand years, will be to him as but a moment. When the true follower of Christ closes his eyes in death, it will seem to him but an instant till the resurrection morning. This is the "blessed hope" that has fired the hearts of millions of Christ's followers in every age (see Titus 2:13, 14; Phil. 3:20, 21).

John penned these words concerning the state of the dead: "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13). Here the servants of God are spoken of as resting from their labors. And what is the next event portrayed? "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped" (verses 14-16).

When the time of the harvest shall come, the Lord will reap the harvest of the earth. There will be those who are resting in their graves awaiting the word of the Life-giver, and those also who have not seen death, nor ever shall.

In the heart of the committed Christian who understands and accepts these truths there is no fear of a burning hell, or a purgatory, or a place "in torment." That person is content to await the reward he knows will be his at the coming of the Lord. The apostle Paul knew this would always be a comfort to the believer in Christ, as it was to him in his martyrdom (see 2 Tim. 4:6-8).

The resurrection of the just, which is to take place at the return of Christ to this earth, will be the day of reward for all the true saints of God (see John 6:40, 54). None of these rewards are given *at death*. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and *then* he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27).

God promises an eternal home to His faithful ones, those who have forsaken all things that defile. In this "holy city, new Jerusalem," only the holy shall dwell. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:7, 8).

The apostle Paul states plainly, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: *whose end is destruction*, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)" (Phil. 3:17-19). Then the apostle continues, "For our conversation [the way of life of Christians] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working

whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (verses 20, 21).

In another place the apostle gives a beautiful portrayal of the church, composed of those who shall be saved, saying that "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27).

Those who shall be eternally lost and those who shall be eternally saved are vividly contrasted by John the Revelator: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. . . . Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 22:11-15).

The Creator of the universe has said that "the city [New Jerusalem] had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:23-27).

And God *will* save the righteous. Through acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ all may be righteous and dwell in His presence forever.

How beautiful, how comforting, to know that when day is done for this life our loved ones—and ourselves as well—shall fall asleep in the arms of Him who never slumbers or sleeps, there to rest until the breaking of the eternal day when Jesus shall descend from heaven's glorious portals to call, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. 26:19).

Could a more understandable explanation be made than this, even to a little child, that a deceased loved one has gone to sleep and will rest with God watching over him until the day that Jesus will come for all who truly love Him?

Chapter 8

MORMONISM'S CONDITIONAL AND UNCONDITIONAL SALVATION

Mormonism's teachings include an unconditional and a conditional salvation, which should be understood by each of us. In the following statements the two conditions are described by the church's doctrinal expositors.

"The destiny of man is to pass through three estates. First he existed as a spirit in the presence of God. Second, by and through the goodness and mercy of the Father, he is privileged to come to earth, here or somewhere else, and pass through mortality partaking of all the vicissitudes of which the mortal life has to offer. The third and final estate is that of the resurrection, the coming forth from the grave after death, the spirit and body being inseparably united. This is immortality. This gift will be given to every mortal creature whether he be good or bad, whether or not he seek it. This is *unconditional* redemption. Of this unconditional redemption, Elder Orson Pratt has said:

"The universal redemption of the posterity of Adam from the fall will be fully accomplished after the earth has been filled with its measure of inhabitants, and all men have been redeemed from the grave to immortality, and the earth itself has been changed and made entirely new. The children of Adam had no agency in the transgression of their first parent, and therefore

they are not required to exercise any agency in their redemption from its penalty. They are redeemed from it without faith, repentance, baptism, or any other act, either of the mind or body. Unconditional redemption is a gift forced upon mankind which they cannot reject, though they were disposed. Not so with conditional redemption; it can be received or rejected according to the will of the creature.

“Redemption from the original sin is without faith or works; redemption from our own sins is given through faith and works. Both are the gifts of free grace; but while one is a gift forced upon us unconditionally, the other is a gift merely offered to us conditionally.

“The earth, like the posterity of Adam, was cursed because of the original sin, and like them, it will be redeemed unconditionally, and restored again unto the presence of God. . . .

“Though all mankind are to be fully redeemed from the effects of the original sin, yet, we have great reason to fear that but a few will be redeemed from their own sins. Those few who are redeemed will receive the earth for an eternal inheritance; for the earth, as we have already observed, will be unconditionally redeemed from the curse of the original sin, and so far as that sin is concerned, it will be no obstacle to the earth's entering into the presence of God.”—Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Progress of Man*, pp. 507-509.

Joseph Fielding Smith says this regarding these teachings of Orson Pratt: “From these very clear words of Elder Orson Pratt we discover that there is a salvation coming to every soul without any act upon his part, and then, there is another salvation, which, perhaps, we should designate as the exaltation, which will be given to the few.”—*Ibid.*, p. 509.

These comprehensive statements give clear views of

the Mormon teaching of the eternal existence of both saints and sinners. We must carefully analyze these declarations by placing them in the test tube of God's Holy Book, the Bible.

We shall briefly summarize the teachings expressed above by both LDS Apostle Orson Pratt and President Joseph Fielding Smith, who declare that:

1. In the resurrection, the spirit and body will be "*inseparably united*," which will be immortality.

2. "*This gift will be given to every mortal creature whether he be good or bad, whether or not he seek it.*"

3. "*Unconditional redemption is a gift forced upon mankind which they cannot reject, though they were disposed.*"

4. "There is a salvation coming to every soul without any act upon his part."

This LDS teaching of unconditional salvation, lies at the very heart of Mormonism. It is one with the LDS doctrine of the preexistence of all mankind, i.e., that every human soul lived "as a spirit in the presence of God" prior to its existence here on earth, and that at the birth of every baby a preexisting spirit unites with the baby's mortal body of flesh in this world, and at death leaves the body to go to an intermediate place.

Let us now see what the Bible says on this important subject. In Romans 2:7 the apostle Paul refers to those "who by patient continuance in well doing *seek* for glory and honour and *immortality*, eternal life."

Do we here find harmony between Bible teaching and Mormonism's belief that immortality will be "unconditionally" given to every mortal creature whether he be good or bad, whether or not he *seek* it? This Bible passage reveals exactly the opposite, that immortality is something for which we "seek" during our lifetime through "patient continuance in well doing."

Through whom do we seek "immortality, eternal

life"? And where do we find it? The Bible answers that "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11, 12). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). These words from the lips of the Son of God reaffirm His words to Nicodemus in John 3:16.

Note again that not only does eternal life come through faith in the Son but there is *no endless life or continued living anywhere outside the Son*. "He that hath *not* the Son of God *hath not life*," and "he that believeth *not* the Son *shall not see life*." He shall "perish," he shall cease to live. And if one perishes, is it not then impossible for him to "endure forever"?

John wrote that Christ has said, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). And again, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (verse 7). These and other Bible verses attest the irrefutable truth that everlasting life, eternal life, immortality, life that will endure forever, *is found only in Christ through our acceptance of Him*. The final fulfillment of the promise of eternal life or unending existence, which all may clearly understand, will come through Christ only.

Eternal salvation is a gift of God through Christ to all who will accept it. To those who refuse it, "the wages of sin is death [eternal death]; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

The LDS Church makes a marked difference between *immortality* and *eternal* life. Joseph Fielding Smith expresses it thus:

"Now there is a difference between *immortality* and *eternal life*. *Immortality is the gift to live forever*. It comes to

every creature. *Eternal life is to have the kind of life that God has.* All those who become servants will have immortality, but they who become sons and daughters of God will have the *additional* gift of eternal life, which is the greatest gift of God.

“Eternal life is life in the presence of the Father and the Son. Those who receive it become *members of the ‘Church of the Firstborn’* and are *heirs as sons and daughters of God.* They receive the *fulness of blessings.* *They become like the Father and the Son and are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.*

“*What is eternal life? It is to have ‘a continuation of the seeds forever and ever’ [Doctrine and Covenants 132:19]. No one receives eternal life except those who receive the exaltation.* Eternal life is the greatest gift of God; immortality is not. The Lord says: ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.’ Everlasting life in this passage is the same as eternal life.”—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, pp. 8, 9.

The LDS teaching is, then, that God has eternal life, but that immortality is a kind of lower level of life. Note their teaching again: “Immortality is the gift to live forever. It comes to every creature. Eternal life is to have the kind of life that God has.”

But consider these Scripture passages:

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Tim. 1:17). “Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting” (chap. 6:15, 16).

These texts clearly state that God is “eternal, im-

mortal." If one wishes to differentiate regarding the quality of each, for the sake of argument, God still has both.

But there is no evidence that the Bible makes distinctions between immortality and eternal life for the human family. For example, Paul writes of what happens to all the godly of all ages who shall be saved at Jesus' return. This includes all those who would receive the so-called "eternal life" and those who would receive only "immortality." But the apostle makes no differentiation. He writes: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:51-55).

To our knowledge, only Mormonism makes a difference in the terms "immortality" and "eternal life" when speaking of the life to come for the children of God.

Now let us compare with Bible scriptures these statements from Joseph Fielding Smith:

"IMMORTALITY AND ETERNAL LIFE COMPARED. Immortality and eternal life are two separate things, one distinct from the other. Every man shall receive immortality, whether he be good, bad, or indifferent, for the resurrection from the dead shall come to all.

"Eternal life is something in addition. None shall receive eternal life save it be those who keep the commandments of the Lord and are *entitled* thus to enter

into his presence. When the Lord says, 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it,' he means that there will be very few of the children of men who will prove themselves worthy in this life, to go back and dwell in his presence. That is eternal life, to dwell in the presence of the Father and receive exaltation from him. He did not mean that those who passed through the gate which is strait, and the way which is narrow, were those who should be raised from the dead.

"Very gladly would the Lord give to everyone eternal life, but since that blessing can come only on *merit*—through the faithful performance of duty—only those who are worthy shall receive it."—*Ibid.*, pp. 4, 5. (Italics supplied.)

There is not one person on the face of the earth who can merit immortality, eternal life, everlasting salvation, or any other term that may be used for it in or out of the Bible. Redemption *cannot be merited, cannot be earned*, for "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: *not of works, lest any man should boast*" (Eph. 2:8, 9). We are not "entitled" to anything. It is only through "the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (verse 7), that any of us may ever receive the precious gift of everlasting life.

Is there not, then, something wrong with Mormonism's definitions of immortality and eternal life? When we stand on the Word of God, the terms "everlasting life," "eternal life," "life eternal," and "immortality" are all synonymous. Jesus and inspired writers of the Bible make no difference. In John 3:16 Jesus speaks of "everlasting life." In John 10:27, 28, He speaks of His "sheep" receiving "eternal life." The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy that God "hath saved us, and called us with

an holy calling, *not according to our works*, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought *life and immortality* to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:9, 10).

Mormonism teaches that "eternal life is the greatest gift of God: immortality is not"; that only those who receive "eternal life" shall dwell in the presence of God and Christ. Those who receive only "immortality" shall be saved, but they will be given "a place somewhere" in some kingdom "outside" of the presence of God, as described below:

"HIGHER KINGDOMS MINISTER TO LOWER. Yet, through his abundant mercy, the Lord will do for all the best that can be done, and therefore he will give to all *a place somewhere*—if not within the gates of the Holy City, then it must be on the *outside*—where those who are not entitled to the fulness of blessings may be ministered to by those who have greater glory. For we read also here in this vision, where the glories are spoken of, that those who dwell in the celestial kingdom shall minister unto those of the terrestrial kingdom; those in the terrestrial kingdom shall minister to those of the telestial kingdom.

"The Son may go to the terrestrial, but they who enter into that kingdom shall not receive the fulness of the Father; they will not see the greatness of his glory. He withholds that from them. They never come back again into the fulness of his presence. Those who enter into the telestial kingdom will not receive the fulness of the Father or of the Son. They will not visit there but will send messengers to visit the inhabitants of that glory and instruct them.

"Those in the terrestrial kingdom shall visit those in the telestial kingdom, and those of the celestial shall visit those in the terrestrial kingdom. Where the Father is

these cannot come, for the Lord has said: 'Where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end' (*Doctrine and Covenants* 76:112). Yet in this very same section it is written that notwithstanding this fact, so great shall be the blessings that come to those who enter there that it is beyond our comprehension. Such is the great mercy of the Lord. He will endeavor to save all his children and exalt as many as he possibly can."—*Ibid.*, pp. 5, 6. (Italics supplied.)

These paragraphs overlook not only what the Lord and Saviour declared in His own words, in John 3:16, but also the words given the apostle John by the Holy Spirit of God, in Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: *which is the second death.*"

This verse does not picture the wicked as being given "a place somewhere" to live eternally. This scripture—and many others confirm it—plainly states that they shall "have their part" in the "lake of fire," which will be "the second," or final, death, from which there will be no resurrection. Note this also: "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and *devoured* them. . . . And death and hell [the grave] were cast into the lake of fire. *This is the second death.* And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (chap. 20:9-15). Our Father in heaven would have every one born into this world to be saved eternally in that "land that is fairer than day." But those who turn their backs upon Him, and reject His offer of life everlasting, will "perish."

Does not such a teaching of life "somewhere . . . outside" the presence of God, as in a terrestrial or a

telestial kingdom, constitute a false “second chance” offered, not by the Lord, but by Satan, who would have the vile, the liar, the whoremonger, the lover of self, the unholy, believe that he can live pretty well as he pleases and still live eternally some place in the universe of a holy God? Such a doctrine is parallel to Roman Catholicism’s dogma of an eternally burning hell—a doctrine also taught by some Protestant bodies. This concept of an eternally burning hell has turned thousands of thinking men and women away from Christianity, for to them it portrays God as a tyrant rather than a God of kindness and love.

Mormonism teaches that even “the fish, the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field” are to receive unconditional redemption.

“CHRIST REDEEMS ALL FORMS OF LIFE. We need a little more explanation as to just what we mean by unconditional redemption. That means to restore us from this mortal state to the immortal state; in other words, to give unto us the resurrection. That comes to *every creature*, not only to men but also to the fish, the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, as the Lord tells us in section 29, of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. All of them had spiritual existence before they were placed upon the earth; therefore they are to be redeemed.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 10, 11.

In summary, let us read from this same LDS authority, comparing his statements with God’s Sacred Word.

“Redemption from the original sin is without faith or works; redemption from our own sins is given through faith and works. *Both are the gifts of free grace*; but while one is a gift *forced* upon us unconditionally, the other is a gift *merely offered* to us conditionally. The redemption of the one is *compulsory*; the reception of the other is *voluntary*. Man cannot, by any possible act,

prevent his redemption from the fall; but he can utterly refuse and prevent his redemption from the penalty of his own sins.'”—*Ibid.*, p. 10.* (*Italics his.*)

There is but one redemption or salvation taught in the Bible. It is emphasized in the last chapter of the Word of God: “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And *whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17). “Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” “And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. . . . Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:35, 40, 47-54).

Mark well the words “he that *cometh* to me”; “every one which . . . *believeth* on Him”; “He that *believeth* on me hath everlasting life”; “*if* any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.” Christ came as the “true Light,” and “as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* on his name” (chap. 1:9, 12). “But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (chap. 20:31).

In every instance, everlasting life is dependent upon

* Quoting from the *Millennial Star*, vol. 12, p. 69.

the individual's acceptance of the invitation of God. There is no other plan.

The apostle Paul wrote, Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And *if ye be Christ's, then* are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26-29). Life without end is offered to all mankind. And "God is no respecter of persons," we read in Acts 10:34. The greatest and most important question is, Have I given my heart, my life, my all, to the loving Saviour, so that I may know for certain that I am "Christ's," and am numbered among "Abraham's seed," that I am an heir "according to the promise"? Surely it is clear to us now that in God's plan of salvation there can be no "unconditional redemption."

Mormonism's doctrine of conditional and unconditional salvation is not taught by John the Beloved, nor by Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. It is not the doctrine of Moses, the penman of the Pentateuch, of Job, the patient one, nor of David, Israel's sweet singer of psalms. Neither is it from Isaiah, the gospel prophet of the Old Testament, nor from the lips of Solomon, the wisest of all men before Christ. And it is not the teaching of Jesus Christ Himself.

Chapter 9

MORMONISM'S SPIRITS IN PRISON

In the preceding chapter we discussed Mormonism's doctrine of unconditional immortality, which is that "every soul born into this world shall receive the resurrection and immortality and shall endure forever."

We have shown from the Bible that everlasting salvation is conditional on personal acceptance of it on Heaven's terms, that *all* life is in Christ, and that outside of Him there is no eternal life.

These conditions are: (1) that we believe in Jesus, the Christ; (2) that we accept Him as our personal Saviour from sin; (3) that we repent of the sins we have committed; (4) that we ask His forgiveness promised in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"; and (5) that we turn from our sins to walk "in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake" (Ps. 23:3).

When we believe, repent, and, according to God's promise, receive His forgiveness through our Saviour, who gave His life to redeem us, we have righteousness through faith in Him, not because of any works we have done, for "by grace are ye saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8).

Mormonism speaks of many classes of people. The

Bible recognizes only two, the righteous and the unrighteous. The righteous are those who have accepted the grace of God through Christ our Lord. Those who have not accepted His grace are unrighteous, and are still in their sins. According to the Bible there is no hope of eternal life for this latter group, except as they obtain it in this present life through repentance, confession, and acceptance of the free gift of righteousness.

The LDS Church teaches that the second death is not an eternal death, but only banishment from the presence of God:

“As all things have their opposites, there is a *punishment which is the opposite to eternal life*, which punishment is the ‘heaviest of all cursings.’ This is the second or spiritual death, which is banishment from the presence of God and from his light and truth forever. In speaking of the *second death as eternal death*, we do not mean that those who partake of it are doomed eternally to the dissolution of the body and also of the spirit. *The spirit of man is eternal and cannot die in the sense of ceasing to exist.*”—Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, p. 218.

The LDS Church teaches that after death there still are opportunities to receive the light and truth of God, and that when the rebellious die they will go to some spirit prison. To support this belief they quote certain Bible verses, which we shall later carefully analyze.

But first let us read the exact LDS teaching on the preaching of the gospel to the “spirits in prison.” Note especially that this doctrine is founded on statements in the book *Pearl of Great Price*, Moses 7:37-39:

“But behold, their sins shall be upon the heads of their fathers; Satan shall be their father, and misery shall be their doom; and the whole heavens shall weep over them, even all the workmanship of mine hands; wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these

shall suffer? But behold, these which thine eyes are upon shall perish in the floods; and behold, I will shut them up; a prison have I prepared for them. And That which I have chosen hath plead before my face. Wherefore, he suffereth for their sins; inasmuch as they will repent in the day that my Chosen shall return unto me, and until that day they shall be in torment.”

President Joseph Fielding Smith's comments regarding these verses are: “There is an expression that the Lord made to Enoch in regard to those who should be destroyed in the flood, in the days of Noah. He said he had prepared a prison for them, because of their disobedience, and would shut them in it. There they would remain until the time when they should be visited by the Son of God, when he should again carry to them that message which they rejected from Noah.

“We read in the scriptures that the Son of God, after his death, went to the spirits in prison and taught them the principles of the gospel, that they might live according to God in the spirit and be judged according to men in the flesh. Those very same spirits, who were disobedient in the days of Noah, heard the voice of the Son of God when he went to them, while his body was in the tomb, and all who were willing to receive his testimony and obey his commandments received relief from their torment.

“But from the time of their death in the flood until the time of the crucifixion of the Savior, they were shut up in the prison house in torment, suffering the penalty of their transgressions, because they refused to hear a prophet of the Lord—and so it will be with every man who rejects the gospel, whether he lived anciently or whether he lives now; it makes no difference. *Every man who rejects the testimony of Jesus, who denies the truth, who refuses to receive the testimony as it is declared unto him by the elders of Israel, shall be punished and shall be placed in the*

prison house, and there he shall stay until he has paid the penalty of his transgressions.”—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, pp. 228, 229.

In connection with these statements, President Smith makes reference to the following passage in the Bible: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Peter 3:18-20).

Now, every Christian accepts verse 18, which states that Christ “once suffered for sins, the just [Christ] for the unjust [all sinners].” Why did He suffer? “That he might bring us to God.” This is, of course, the entire purpose of the gospel. But what happened to Christ? He was “put to death in the flesh.”

The Saviour died on Calvary’s cross for every man, as the apostle Paul states: “Christ died for the ungodly. . . . But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life” (Rom. 5:6-10).

Going back to 1 Peter 3:18-20, we note that Jesus was “put to death in the flesh, but quickened [made alive] by the Spirit: *by which* [the Holy Spirit] also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.” It was concerning the days of Noah, prior to the great Flood, that the apostle Peter wrote. And we have

positive evidence that it was the Holy Spirit of God who did the preaching, through Noah, "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). For "the Lord said, *My spirit shall not always strive with man*" (Gen. 6:3).

Just so in our generation, Christ does not come in the flesh to teach the gospel of salvation, but He does so by the Holy Spirit, through His representatives on earth. Thus it is counted as if it were done by Christ Himself.

While Jesus was on earth, "as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day" (Luke 4:16). It was on such an occasion that He explained His mission among men. The book of Isaiah was handed to Him, and "when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written" concerning Himself, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, *to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound*" (Isa. 61:1).

It was the *living*, and not the *dead*, who were to hear the gospel story of salvation, who were to be set at "liberty" from *Satan's prison house of sin*; not only in the days before the Flood but in the days when the Saviour walked among men, and all the centuries between. Yes, and in every century thereafter, including our day.

Actually, in no age of the world, ancient or modern, could the dead receive the gospel. "For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: *they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth*. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth" (Isa. 38:18, 19). "For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" (Ps. 6:5). "Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave?" (Ps. 88:11). "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that

go down into silence” (Ps. 115:17).

The Scriptures tell us that before the Flood “the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence” (Gen. 6:11). Who was guilty of this violence? Verse 5 explains: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” God then decided to destroy the wicked. Thus they were placed under a death sentence, and their execution date was set. But God’s longsuffering gave them 120 more years in which to repent. He waited for them, just as He waits now for our present sinful generation to turn from their sins. It was *during that time* that Christ, through the Holy Spirit, by the preaching of Noah (2 Peter 2:5), pleaded with them. The prison house of sin in which the wicked antediluvians lived was this earth. It still is the prison of the wicked and will remain so until Christ comes to destroy the author of sin and his followers (see Rev. 20).

Genesis 6:9 substantiates the apostle Peter’s words concerning the uprightness and godliness of Noah in the eyes of the Lord: “Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” These strong traits of character in Noah made it possible for the Spirit of God to use him as a “preacher of righteousness” when “the longsuffering of God waited” and “while the ark was a preparing.”

But when the period of probation expired, God said, “The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth” (verse 13). So God decided He must wipe out the stain of world-wide sin by a world-wide flood!

This event of the days of Noah has been recorded for our admonition too, for we read: “There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Peter 3:3-6). And again: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7).

These Scripture verses corroborate the account we have been carefully studying in 1 Peter 3:18-20. Sin and corruptness of character in Noah's day had bound nearly the entire human family by a chain of evil.

Through the Holy Spirit the heavenly Father continued to "strive with man" until all hope was gone, and then "the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Peter 3:6).

In quick summary, then: (1) Christ suffered for our sins—*He*, the just; *we*, the unjust; (2) that He might bring, or restore, us to God; (3) He died in the flesh, but was "quickened" (made alive) by the Holy Spirit; (4) it was *by* this same Holy Spirit that Christ preached to "the spirits in prison" *during the time* of the building of the ark; (5) Noah was the agent through whom the preaching was done; and (6) the gospel was preached to the wicked antediluvians *while* "the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah," while the ark was being constructed. And how many were saved from the Flood? "Eight souls were saved by water" (1 Peter 3:20), by heeding God's command to take refuge in the ark.

The "spirits in prison" of whom Peter speaks *were none other than those who were alive* "in the days of Noah," and who, in the flesh, heard the call to God through the

lips of Noah, but rejected the call.

Some people would have us believe that the gospel was not preached in Old Testament times, and that the Bible contains no proof that it was. But we read, "For unto us was the gospel preached, *as well as unto them* [the Hebrews of the exodus from Egypt]; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb. 4:2).

This verse states clearly that the gospel *was* preached in Old Testament days, and was not for the New Testament church alone. The word *gospel* means "good news." What good news? The good news in Old Testament times that Christ *would* die to save the ungodly; and the good news in the New Testament that He *did* die to accomplish that salvation. The good news was that "Christ . . . once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18), that we might dwell together forever with them.

The LDS Church refers to 1 Peter 4:6 as evidence that the gospel was preached to the spirits of the dead in some prison house: "For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."

This verse, too, means exactly what it says—that the gospel "*was* . . . preached [in Old Testament days] also to them that *are* dead." They were *very much alive* at the time the gospel was preached to them. But in Peter's day they were dead and sleeping in their graves, waiting there till the resurrection day.

The weakness of the doctrine of preaching to the spirits in prison is self-evident. Since, as we learned in a preceding chapter, death is a "sleep," and the "dead know not any thing," is it not impossible to believe the doctrine that "spirits" of men are being "taught . . . the principles of the gospel" *after death*?

It has long been taught by the LDS Church that a person will have an opportunity after death to be cleansed from his sins. But where is the need for such a teaching? Is not our Lord Jesus Christ a perfect Saviour, wholly adequate for the redemption of all men? Is the infinite God incapable of doing what is right for every person, regardless of when or where he lived?

It is true that even the mighty God of heaven uses the consecrated efforts of men and women here on earth to witness for Him. But is it not rather incredible that the all-sufficient redemptive power of Christ should be set aside? Our Saviour is "able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:21). And "he is able also to save them *to the uttermost* that come unto God by him" (Heb. 7:25).

Mormonism's doctrine of "spirits in prison" seems to give man another chance after death. But is this true Bible doctrine? Isaiah discerningly states, "Let favour be shewed to the wicked, *yet will he not learn righteousness*: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord" (Isa. 26:10). After a person closes his heart to the many calls the Lord gives him in this life to repent of his wrongdoings, even though ten thousand opportunities were presented to him afterward, they would not change him into a God-fearing follower after righteousness.

Chapter 10

MORMONISM'S BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD

The performing of proxy work for the dead is, to my knowledge, practiced only by the LDS Church. In fact, this claim is put forth by President Joseph Fielding Smith in his book *Doctrines of Salvation*, under the heading “SALVATION FOR DEAD PROVES DIVINITY OF CHURCH”:

“This wonderful knowledge made known in our dispensation was like the piercing of the rays of the sun into the abyss of darkness. Before this knowledge was revealed, it was taught that all who died without confessing Christ or believing on His name, were eternally and irredeemably lost. There was no ray of hope for them no matter how circumspect their lives had been.

“Now the mercy of a just Redeemer, banishing the darkness and ignorance of this benighted religious world of unbelief, has shone forth with resplendent glory. Thousands have been made to rejoice among the living and hundreds of thousands among the dead. It is not very strange that this doctrine of salvation through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the gospel for the dead is taught *solely* by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for it is *one of the vital signs of the true Church of Jesus Christ*, and all men may be perfectly assured—for it is a divine truth—*where this*

doctrine is not taught and practiced, there the true Church is not to be found.”—Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, pp. 137, 138.

Note that the LDS Church holds this teaching to be “one of the vital signs of the true Church of Jesus Christ.” Going further, it states that *any church not holding the doctrine of baptism for the dead is by that token* “not . . . the true church.”

This teaching of proxy baptism for the dead we should most seriously ponder. If it is of God, anyone rejecting it will find himself a second-rate citizen in the coming kingdom of God. On the other hand if, after a careful weighing of the evidence, we should discover that this doctrine of Mormonism is untrue, unbiblical, and unnecessary to our salvation, anyone still insisting upon its observance would find himself at variance with his Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Relevant to the belief of proxy baptism for the dead, and necessary to an understanding of it, are an array of teachings held by the LDS Church. Some of these we have already covered. Others we must investigate for a full comprehension of this singular doctrine.

But first, we must see from authoritative LDS writings what the exact teachings of the church are on this subject. Perhaps there is no better way than the question-and-answer method to determine this.

All answers to our questions will come from the pens of Joseph Fielding Smith, Brigham Young, and Joseph Smith, each of whom had something to say about the subject.

Question 1: How important to Mormonism is work for the dead?

Joseph Fielding Smith answers: “The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, ‘*The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead.*’ The reason for this is that all the dead must be redeemed

from their sins through obedience to the gospel just as the living are. It is required of us to perform this labor in their behalf.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 146, 147. (Italics his.)

Question 2: Was this the teaching of Brigham Young also?

“We have a work to do just as important in its sphere as the Savior’s work was in its sphere. Our fathers cannot be made perfect without us; we cannot be made perfect without them. They have done their work and now sleep. We are now called upon to do ours; which is to be the greatest work man ever performed on the earth. Millions of our fellow-creatures who have lived upon the earth and died without a knowledge of the Gospel must be officiated for in order that they may inherit eternal life.”*—*Seeking After Our Dead*, Genealogical Society of Utah, pp. 34, 35.

Question 3: What is declared to be the greatest responsibility of the church and of the individual?

“The Lord has given to the Church the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the nations of the earth. *This is the greatest responsibility of the Church.* Men are to be taught the gospel and called to repentance and warned. When they refuse to heed the warning, they must be left without excuse.

“The Lord has also placed upon the individual members of the Church a responsibility. *It is our duty as individuals to seek after our immediate dead*—those of our own line. This is the greatest *individual responsibility* that we have, and we should carry it through in behalf of our fathers who have gone before.”—Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, p. 146. (Italics his.)

Question 4: How far back does Mormonism claim this proxy work should extend?

* See Brigham Young. *Discourses*, p. 623.

“Moreover, we cannot be made perfect without our faithful dead who are also heirs of celestial exaltation. There must be a welding, or joining together of generations, *from Adam down*. [Italics supplied.] Parents must be sealed to each other and children to parents, in order to receive the blessings of the celestial kingdom. *Therefore our salvation and progression depends upon the salvation of our worthy dead with whom we must be joined in family ties.* This can only be accomplished in our temples.

“The Prophet further declared that the doctrine of salvation for the dead is the ‘most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel.’ The reasons for this are the great magnitude of the labor, and the fact that we have the privilege of officiating for the dead and assisting in giving to them the privileges that we also enjoy, through our obedience to the gospel.”—*Ibid.*, p. 147.

Question 5: Explicitly what is this work for the dead?

“When we go into the temple to do work for the dead, we go representing the dead, acting vicariously and as proxies for the dead. We are not treating those dead individuals as if they were dead. What are we doing? We are treating them as beings living in the flesh, and we are representing them. What are we doing? Giving unto them in person by proxy that which they must receive and which should have been received here and would have been received by them here had the privilege come.

“So we are only presenting to the dead such ordinances and privileges as pertain to those who are living here and now. So far as faith is concerned, they exercise that where they are. So far as repentance is concerned, they repent where they are. We are baptized for them because they cannot be baptized there. We are confirmed and ordained for them. Why? Because they cannot receive those ordinances there. Why? Because

these ordinances pertain to mortal life, and *all we are doing for the dead is to give them that which pertains to this mortal existence in which we find ourselves.*"—*Ibid.*, pp. 142, 143. (Italics his.)

Question 6: Does this proxy work for the dead make saviors of those who perform it, according to Mormonism?

"This doctrine of giving an *equal* chance to the dead to hear and receive the truth, wherein they were denied that privilege while living, is *one of the grandest, most reasonable, and soul satisfying doctrines ever revealed to man.* I would that all men might ponder over it and then, obtaining the spirit, seek to bless their dead by making it possible for the ordinances of the gospel to be performed for them in the temples of the Lord. By this means we may help to save those who have gone before and in our limited way become *saviors to many people.* How great shall be the satisfaction of the man and the woman who have performed those ordinances for their dead, when they stand in the presence of their dead, and see their joy and hear expressions of gratitude."—*Ibid.*, p. 143. (Italics his.)

We continue with other statements relative to the question.

"Baptism is an ordinance belonging to this life, as also are confirmation and ordination to the priesthood, and the man who does not receive these blessings here cannot receive them in the spirit world. There he may repent and believe and accept the truth, but he cannot be baptized, confirmed, or ordained, or endowed, for these ordinances belong here. What is to be done in the matter?

"We are going to take substitutes who will act vicariously, which means one acting for another, and in the temples they will stand for those who are dead and there, in the behalf of the dead, receive all these bless-

ings for them. When they do this, *if the dead accept the labor performed, it is accounted unto them the same as if they had acted for themselves.*”—*Ibid.*, pp. 161, 162.

“We may, without any suffering so far as we are concerned, *act as saviors on Mount Zion by going into the temple and doing for our dead the things they cannot do for themselves.* But there are thousands of Latter-day Saints who seem to be uncertain about this.

“They are willing to go to meeting, willing to pay their tithing and attend to the regular duties of the Church, but they do not seem to feel or understand the importance of receiving the blessings in the temple of the Lord which will bring them into exaltation. It is a strange thing. People seem to be content just to slide along without taking advantage of the opportunities presented to them and without receiving these necessary covenants that will bring them back into the presence of God as sons and daughters.”—*Ibid.*, p. 152.

Question 7: Are any exempt from the proxy work of baptism for the dead?

“NONE EXEMPT FROM WORK FOR DEAD. But this [previously discussed] condition does not relieve from responsibility the inactive, dilatory members, who are doing nothing for their dead. These persons cannot expect to receive credit for what others may be doing. The responsibility rests with equal force on all, according to our individual ability and opportunities.

“It matters not what else we have been called to do, or what position we may occupy, or how faithfully in other ways we have labored in the Church, none is exempt from this great obligation. It is required of the apostle as well as the humblest elder. Place, or distinction, or long service in the Church, in the mission field, the stakes of Zion, or where or how else it may have been, will not entitle one to disregard the salvation of one’s dead.

“Some may feel that if they pay their tithing, attend

their regular meetings and other duties, give of their substance to the poor, perchance spend one, two, or more years preaching in the world, that they are absolved from further duty. But *the greatest and grandest duty of all is to labor for the dead.*”—*Ibid.*, pp. 148, 149.

Question 8: Was this proxy work performed in Old Testament times before the days of Christ?

“There was no baptism for the dead in the days of Elijah, or before Christ bridged the gulf which separated the righteous in paradise from the wicked in the spirit world. Christ was the first to declare the gospel to the dead, and it was not until after his resurrection that the privilege of baptism for the dead was granted.”—Ibid., p. 114.

Question 9: What do the Mormons believe will be done for the salvation of the dead during the millennium, or 1,000 years?

“The work of saving the dead has practically been reserved for the dispensation of the fulness of times, when the Lord shall restore all things. It is, therefore, the duty of the Latter-day Saints to see that it is accomplished. We cannot do it all at once, but will have the 1,000 years of the millennium to do it in. In that time the work must be done in behalf of the dead of the previous 6,000 years, for all who need it. Temples will be built for this purpose, and the labor in them will occupy most of the time of the saints.”—Ibid., p. 166.

Declaring that the millennium will be a great era of salvation for the dead, President Smith wrote: “Some people may think that it is impossible for us to do this work for the dead because we have not the names of people who lived in ancient times. We have not the records, we do not know how to reach them from anything we have in this life, and there have been millions of people who no doubt were honest, and did the best they knew, but died without a knowledge of the gospel, whose names it is impossible for us to obtain.

How are they going to be saved?

"It is our duty to go to the temple and take our records and work for the dead of our own lineage as far back as we can go, but what about these others? I will tell you. *The great work of the millennium, of 1,000 years, will be for the salvation of these souls.*

"Now let us keep it clearly in our minds that we do not enter into exaltation until *after* the resurrection. We do not enter into exaltation in the spirit world. We have privileges there, of course, based upon faithfulness and obedience to the gospel, but during the millennium—and that is the great purpose of the millennium—we will go into the temples. . . .

"Those who will be living here then will be in *daily* communication with those who have passed through the resurrection, and they will come with this information, this knowledge that we do not have and will give it to those who are in mortality saying, 'Now go into the temples and do this work; when you get this done, we will bring you other names.' And in that way every soul who is entitled to a place in the celestial kingdom of God will be ferreted out, and not one soul shall be overlooked."—*Ibid.*, pp. 166, 167.

Question 10: Are *mortal* men to live on the earth during the millennium?

"Latter-day Saints believe that the day is near, even at the doors, when Christ shall make his appearance as the rightful ruler of the earth. When that time comes, *the whole earth and all things which remain upon its face shall be changed, and 'the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.'* . . .

"However, there shall be *mortality* upon the face of the earth during the thousand years, because of the great work that is to be accomplished of salvation for the dead."—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 56, 58.

"*All those who have died in Christ shall come forth from*

the dead at his coming and shall dwell upon the earth as Christ shall be upon the earth during this millennium. They shall not *remain* here *all* the time during the thousand years, but they will mingle with those who are still here in mortal life. These resurrected saints and the Savior himself, shall come to give instruction and guidance; to reveal unto us the things we ought to know; to give us information concerning the work in the temples of the Lord so we may do the work which is essential to the salvation of worthy men.”—*Ibid.*, p. 59.

“However, if we have not kept the commandments of the Lord, if we have been unjust, and lovers of sin and our hearts have been set upon evil, then we shall die and shall not live again until the thousand years are ended. *It is decreed that the unrighteous shall have to spend their time during this thousand years in the prison house prepared for them where they can repent and cleanse themselves through the things which they shall suffer.*”—*Ibid.*, pp. 59, 60.

Question 11: How many of those remaining upon the earth during the millennium are expected to be converted to Mormonism?

“The gospel will be taught far more intensely and with greater power during the millennium, *until all the inhabitants of the earth shall embrace it*. Satan shall be bound so that he cannot tempt any man. Should any man refuse to repent and accept the gospel under those conditions then he would be *accursed*. Through the revelations given to the prophets, we learn that during the reign of Jesus Christ for a thousand years *eventually all people will embrace the truth.*”—*Ibid.*, p. 64.

Question 12: Finally, and *this is a crucial question*, on what scriptural foundation does Mormonism base this vicarious work for the dead? Is it truly a doctrine solidly based on the Bible? Note President Joseph Fielding Smith’s answer carefully:

"We have no record of any of this work and merely the statement made by Paul. (1 Cor. 15:29.) The fact remains, however, that this work has been left almost entirely to this present dispensation. It is our duty to save the dead and that work will continue during the millennium until all are endowed and sealed who are entitled to this blessing."—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 165, 166. (Italics supplied.)

With these twelve questions, we have given opportunity to some of Mormonism's foremost doctrinal authorities to present various facets of the church's teaching of salvation for the dead through proxy baptism.

We have under careful consideration, then, a doctrine declared by its proponents to be:

1. "one of the vital signs of the true Church of Jesus Christ";

2. "the greatest individual responsibility" of every LDS member in this present world;

3. a "joining together of generations from Adam down";

4. a basis for every Mormon's "salvation and progression";

5. that which makes "saviors" of fallen human beings;

6. the belief that "mortality" extends beyond the second coming of Christ, through the 1,000-year millennial period, et cetera.

Let us now analyze this fundamental Mormon belief.

As stated earlier, the Bible is our final court of appeal as to the accuracy of any doctrine. On this basis we shall proceed.

The answer to question twelve has already revealed the *only* Biblical statement on which Mormonism bases its proxy work for the dead. Here is the statement again: "We have no record of any of this work and *merely the statement made by Paul.*" (Italics supplied.) The text to which he refers is this: "Else what shall they do

which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" (1 Cor. 15:29).

Upon that single, much-controverted verse Mormonism has established a system of vicarious ordinances to be performed in behalf of the dead in million- and multi-million-dollar temples erected in certain States of America and in countries across the world.

That one verse in Scripture is admitted by Joseph Fielding Smith to be the *only* one in the Bible that, even according to his own view, could have any basis for such a teaching. But in his letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul had no thought of instructing the Christian church in a proxy work for the dead.

A specific preparation is required of the individual who wishes to work for the dead in an LDS temple. He must obtain the genealogies of his ancestral lineage. This genealogical work is an absolute *must* in LDS temple work for the dead. President Joseph Fielding Smith states it this way:

"Who are the fathers spoken of by Malachi, and who are the children [Mal. 4:5, 6]? *The fathers* are our dead ancestors who died without the privilege of receiving the gospel, but who received the promise that the time would come when that privilege would be granted them. *The children* are those now living who are preparing genealogical data and who are performing the vicarious ordinances in the temples.

"The turning of the hearts of the children to the fathers is placing or planting in the hearts of the children that feeling and desire which will inspire them to search out the records of the dead. Moreover the planting of the desire and inspiration in their hearts is necessary. This they must have in order that they might go into the house of the Lord and perform the necessary labor for their fathers, who died without a knowledge of the gospel, or without the

privilege of receiving the fulness of the gospel. . . .

"The Lord has called upon us to look after our dead, to seek out their genealogy. . . .

"*Our duty, of course, is to seek after our dead.* We have a department in the Church, the Genealogical Society, where we are gathering in these records for the benefit of the members of the Church, where we can receive information, and are able to give help and encouragement in relation to these matters that pertain to the salvation of our families."—*Ibid.*, pp. 127, 128.

This work of genealogical research is the very core of the work done for the dead as conducted in an LDS temple by members of the Mormon Church. It is obvious that *without this genealogical research no such work for the dead could be performed.*

At this point we inquire: Is it possible that the heavy burden of genealogical research is truly a part of the "good news" of salvation that Jesus gave to those He loves? Is such an endless search into the musty archives of one's ancestry "from Adam down" to the present actually "required" by the Lord to save ourselves and those already fallen in death? *Is such a tedious work for the dead commanded or even encouraged in the Bible?* Is Jesus, the Son of God, asking for this?

In other writings of the apostle Paul, the author of Corinthians, we find answers to these questions:

"Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, *neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies*, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do" (1 Tim. 1:2-4).

And again: "But *avoid* foolish questions, and *genealogies*, and contentions, and strivings about the law;

for they are *unprofitable and vain*" (Titus 3:9).

Note that the apostle Paul places genealogies in very undesirable company—with "fables," "foolish questions," "contentions," and "strivings about the law," all of them being "unprofitable and vain."

Let us remember that the gospel has been *taught throughout every century since Christ*. Therefore, is proxy work for the dead necessary?

Since Christ's day every generation of men has had access to the Father through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Said Paul to the church at Ephesus, "*Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father*" (Eph. 2:18; see also verse 13).

Where, then, is the need for this doctrine of proxy work for the dead when the needed work has already been accomplished by the Son of God?

Would an all-wise God have so arranged His great plan of salvation that the eternal destiny of hundreds of millions of men and women of all generations would be dependent upon those who in the nineteenth century and onward might accept Joseph Smith as a true prophet of God?

Can any man's righteousness be credited to another in the sight of God? Will the righteousness, or the righteous works, of even the greatest Bible characters be accepted in behalf of another? What does the Bible tell us?

"The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, . . . and will cut off man and beast from it: though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God. If I cause noisome beasts to pass through the land, and they spoil it, . . . though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the

Lord God, they *shall deliver neither sons nor daughters*; they only shall be delivered. . . . Or if I bring a sword upon that land, . . . though these three men were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they *only* shall be delivered themselves. Or if I send a pestilence into that land, . . . though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness" (Eze. 14:12-20).

Noah was "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5). Daniel was "a man greatly beloved" (Dan. 10:11). God Himself said of Job "that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man" (Job 1:8). In the sight of God they all were righteous men. Yet God declared through Ezekiel that these faithful and righteous men could not deliver even their own children, and "shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness."

Speaking through Isaiah, the gospel prophet of the Old Testament, Christ declared, "Thus saith the Lord, *your redeemer*, the Holy One of Israel." "I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy *Saviour*." "I, even I, am the Lord; and *beside me there is no saviour*" (Isa. 43:14, 3, 11). Our Saviour Jesus Christ has cared for it all.

Only He who *has no sin* can save men from their sins. And who is this Saviour? An angel from God said, "And she [Mary] shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name *Jesus* [which means "Yahweh is salvation"] *for he shall save his people from their sins*" (Matt. 1:21).

John the Baptist declared, when he saw Jesus coming toward him, "Behold *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29).

Jesus Himself declared: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (chap. 14:6).

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, . . . be it known unto you all, . . . that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. . . . *Neither is there salvation in any other [than Jesus Christ] for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*” (Acts 4:8-12).

And the apostle Paul states positively that “other foundation *can no man lay* than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11).

Christ is our only High Priest. And all who accept His mediation in their behalf in the heavenly tabernacle “made without hands,” may find salvation. Christ our Saviour is our Mediator, standing between us and the Most High God, on whom we have brought reproach through our sins. Christ has opened the way whereby the guilty sinner may find access to God. This is a work in which *no sinner can be accepted in place of another*. Only He who is “without sin” can be man’s mediator. No other can do the Saviour’s work as High Priest. Why? Because His atonement for us is *perfect and complete*; only in it is saving power.

Is the teaching of baptism for the dead a stupendous attempt of Satan to destroy confidence in the complete atoning work of Christ as the Saviour of all men? Does it not seem that Roman Catholicism’s “praying souls out of purgatory” is much like Mormonism’s baptism for the dead? Both are based on the premise that “disembodied spirits” are in need of a ministry and proxy work on the part of the living.

Regarding 1 Corinthians 15:29, the difficulty of this verse is indicated by the fact that as many as 36 solutions have been offered by various Bible commentators. It is, therefore, not possible to know with any degree of certainty to what Paul is referring. But one thing is

clear, he could not have been inferring approval of any practice of baptizing by proxy for the dead. This is evident from a number of Christian teachings:

1. No man can save another.
2. Concomitant with this is the fact that only Jesus is Saviour.
3. The dead have no knowledge of anything that is taking place on earth, or any place else. See chapter six. They are oblivious of all. Therefore they cannot accept anything done for them by proxy.
4. All people who have ever lived upon this earth make their decision, which settles their eternal destiny, during their earthly life. Death ends all human probation. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:27, 28).

The only baptism for another taught anywhere in the Bible is described in the following verses: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, *Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:13-17).

At Pentecost Peter declared, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Baptism is a public acknowledgment that sin has been repented of, and confessed

to God. But Jesus was a perfect Saviour who needed no baptism for Himself, for He “knew no sin” (2 Cor. 5:21); He “did no sin” (1 Peter 2:22); He took “away our sins; and in him is no sin” (1 John 3:5).

We ask, then, If baptism is for the remission of sins, why was Jesus baptized in Jordan, when He had no guilt?

First, He was baptized because He came to pass over the way that we must travel, and to be an example for us (see 1 Peter 2:21). Second, in my opinion, Christ was baptized for all who, for any reason, could not be baptized themselves. His baptism was efficacious for every man, woman, youth, or child who should *ever* choose Christ as Saviour, yet, because of any physical disability or for any other reason or circumstance, be unable to be baptized. An example is the repentant thief on the cross, who found it impossible to go down from his cross into the waters of baptism. The Saviour's baptism was all-sufficient, all-inclusive, and covered all the needs of all men everywhere for all time.

We know that Christ's baptism was accepted by the heavenly Father, for the Bible record is that a voice from heaven declared, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). That baptism was sealed forever when God sent His Spirit “descending like a dove, and lighting upon him” (verse 16).

Christ “is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he *ever liveth* to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). Only Christ is “able” to save. A Christian may, by prayer, intercede in behalf of one who is living, but nowhere does the Bible teach intercession for the dead.

God has always been able to see the needs of every man, for “the eyes of the Lord . . . run to and fro through the whole earth” (Zech. 4:10). And because of His infinite wisdom and love, He will judge every man

righteously, taking into consideration where a person was born and the opportunities he has had, whether he be a follower of God, an atheist, or a poor heathen. The psalmist writes, "And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there" (Ps. 87:5, 6).

Time and money are spent in concern over those who have lived before, not only by the Mormon people but by others who would be followers of Christ. But can we not trust all judgment to a loving and righteous heavenly Father? Our God is well able to save all who were, or are, willing to be saved. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25).

Bible writers of both the Old and the New Testament declare that Christ existed eternally; that there never was a time when He was not (Micah 5:2); that He was always in close fellowship with the eternal heavenly Father (John 17:5); that Jesus the eternal Son of God, "the word . . . made flesh" (chap. 1:14), was always, and will forever be, *the only Saviour* man needs or can have. There is no other. There can be no other. There is life only in Christ.

The Bible declares clearly, unmistakably, "There is no salvation in any one else at all, for there is no other name under heaven granted to men, by which we may receive salvation" (Acts 4:12, N.E.B.). That name is none other than Jesus Christ the righteous.

The Saviour amply cares for all needs of all men toward salvation; so why should we carry heavy burdens on our hearts for the dead? He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For *my* yoke is easy, and *my* burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

The only true proxy or vicarious work recorded in the Holy Scriptures is that of Christ's dying "*for the ungodly*" (Rom. 5:6), then being "raised again for our justification" (chap. 4:25).

The gospel of Christ has been available to man *from the beginning*. Before He walked among men it was a matter of looking forward in faith to the Saviour who would come. After His perfect life on earth, His vicarious death on the cross, His triumphant resurrection, and His return to heaven to minister on behalf of *all*, men and women have by faith accepted the accomplished fact of His sacrifice for them and by faith have claimed His salvation.

We have now measured the Mormon doctrine of baptism for the dead by the perfect plummet—God's Book, the Bible. Using that Word as the surveyor's level and plummet, we have discovered God's perfect provision through His matchless Son for the everlasting salvation of every individual ever born into this world.

Chapter 11

MORMONISM'S MILLENNIUM

“There shall be *mortality* upon the face of the earth during the thousand years.”—Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, p. 58.

Is this statement in agreement with what the Bible has to say, especially with Paul, who has much to write on the subject? But let us read President Smith’s statement in full:

“TEMPLE WORK BY MORTALS DURING MILLENNIUM. However, there shall be *mortality* upon the face of the earth during the thousand years, because of the great work that is to be accomplished of salvation for the dead. During that thousand years of peace the great work of the Lord shall be in the temples, and into those temples the people shall go to labor for those who have passed beyond and who are waiting to have these ordinances which pertain to their salvation performed for them by those who will still dwell in mortality upon the earth. And so there shall be mortal men, but they shall live from the time of birth until they are 100 years old and shall then be changed suddenly.

“Men will have power over disease, and their bodies will become vigorous and strong, for it will be a new creation of all things when Christ shall come.”—*Ibid.*

But Bible testimony makes unbelievable the concept

that the mortality of the righteous extends beyond the second coming of Christ:

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We [servants of God] shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Cor. 15:51-55).

Let us detail chronologically what happens in connection with the second coming of Jesus.

Christ is coming, not to reign on this earth, but to “receive” His people unto Himself. Just prior to His second coming the world will be in chaos, for “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13).

“And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth” (Rev. 11:18).

The Saviour is soon coming for His people, to take them *away* from this corrupt world, so filled with hatred, suspicion, war, and every form of iniquity. Only after this earth has been purified by fire, which will take place after the close of the thousand years, will the promise be fulfilled that “the meek . . . shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5).

The Scriptures teach that only two classes of people will be on the earth at the time of Christ’s return, the

righteous and the wicked; those "in Christ," and those not "in Christ"; the "wheat," and the "tares"; he that "findeth his life," and he who "loseth his life"; he who has "built his house upon a rock" and the one who "built his house upon the sand"; those who go "in at the strait gate," and those who try to enter through the "wide . . . gate"; the "wise" virgins who "were ready" and "went in" with the bridegroom to the marriage, and the "foolish" who failed to take "oil in their vessels with their lamps"; the "sheep" and the "goats"; he who "believeth in him [Jesus]" and shall "not perish, but have everlasting life," and "he that believeth not" and "is condemned already"; they who have on "a wedding garment," and they who are without a wedding garment (1 Thess. 4:16; Matt. 13:30; 10:39; 7:24-27, 13, 14; 25:1-13, 32-46; John 3:16-18; Matt. 22:2-13).

The apostle Paul states clearly in 1 Corinthians 15:53 that the mortal righteous shall "put on immortality." This takes place when they are "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trump*" (verse 52).

And when is "the last trump" to sound? 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 answers, and adds some detail to 1 Corinthians 15: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

This briefly describes the return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in fulfillment of His promise to His people, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). It is this return that will open the millennial period.

Christ and mortal beings will not, then, *dwell on this earth during the millennium*, or thousand-year period, for at the Redeemer's coming, to summarize: (1) The righteous living ("We shall not all sleep") shall "be changed, in a moment"; (2) The "dead in Christ" shall be raised from their graves, and the righteous living shall be "caught up together with them [the resurrected ones] in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Thus, all the righteous of all time will ascend together to heaven, where they will live and reign "with Christ a thousand years"—this same millennial period under discussion (Rev. 20:4); (3) The living wicked will be destroyed "with the brightness of his [Christ's] coming" (2 Thess. 2:8); and (4) All the wicked dead shall remain in that condition "until the thousand years . . . [are] finished" (Rev. 20:5).

John declared, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power" (verse 6). "But the rest of the dead [the wicked] lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (verse 5).

Part of that number are those "whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thess. 2:8). Paul previously explained this in the words "You who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (chap. 1:7-10). These verses refer to Christ's return to this earth—commonly spoken of as His second coming.

Now, if those who shall have part “in the first resurrection” are “blessed and holy,” does it not follow that “the rest of the dead,” who are not resurrected, are *not* blessed and holy, and that “the second death” *shall* have “power” over them?

Also, if all the righteous are “caught up together . . . to meet the Lord in the air,” and from that time shall “ever be with the Lord”; and if all the living wicked shall die—destroyed with the brightness of Christ’s coming, and will not live again till the thousand years are finished—*who will be left to dwell upon the earth during the millennium?* Not one human being will be alive on this earth at any time during the one-thousand-year period, according to the Bible. With all the wicked dead during the thousand years, and all the righteous in heaven during that same millennium, Satan and his evil hosts will be bound by a chain of circumstances, as portrayed in Revelation 20:1-3: “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.” For ten centuries he and his host of evil angels will have ample time to reflect on their coming judgment. “And after that he must be loosed a little season.”

Meanwhile, the righteous in heaven will be sitting with Christ in judgment on the wicked of all ages. “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and

reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4). Paul explains: “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (1 Cor. 6:1-3).

We have seen that the millennium *begins* with the resurrection of the righteous dead at Christ’s second coming and *closes* with the resurrection of all the wicked. These two general resurrections stand like mighty towers at the beginning and end of the millennium.

Filled with holy joy will be those righteous who “shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (John 5:25). They shall rise in the first resurrection never to die again. And they shall be “the people” who shall have been “forgiven their iniquity,” and “shall see the king in his beauty” forevermore (Isa. 33:24, 17).

Dreadful will be the experience of those whose ears have not been tuned to hear the voice of the Son of God as He appealed to them day by day, and therefore will not hear His voice “until the thousand years were finished.” At the end of that time we read that “they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. . . . And death and hell [or “the grave”] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:5-15).

The wicked will have lost everything—eternal life

with Christ and their loved ones, everlasting joy in the continuing fascinating exploration of innumerable wonders to be found throughout God's illimitable universe. For "as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

Are the things we so closely hug to a selfish breast worth such a loss? In the face of immeasurable treasures offered us so freely in Christ, can we stubbornly refuse to accept the plain teachings of the Word of God, which our hearts will tell us are reasonable and true?

Do not these logical steps of truth so clearly given in God's Word nullify the teaching that "there shall be *mortality* upon the face of the earth during the thousand years," and that "temple work" will be carried on for the dead during the millennial period?

Jesus, the Son of God, is dedicated to the total destruction of *all that pertains to sin and evil*. This is unequivocally stated in 1 John 3:8: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

There are those who have joined themselves to Christ and, with Him, are also dedicated to the eradication of sin. Others have willingly submitted themselves to the will of Satan, and in their lives war against righteousness. If we partake of Christ's wonderful righteousness, then we are His. But if we become servants to Satan, who is the source of all evil, we must expect to have a part with him in his final destruction. Said the apostle Paul, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16).

The "lake of fire," which shall bring "the second

death" to Satan and all his hosts of evil angels, must of necessity also bring an end to all in the human family who have refused to give up sin, for they are a part of the "works of the devil"—they are his "servants."

The great God of heaven and earth has made an inviolable promise for every man and woman, every boy and girl, whose name shall be "found written in the book of life" (Rev. 20:15). Here is that promise:

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death; neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Rev. 21:1-5).

The reader has probably noted that this "new heaven and a new earth" will come from the re-creative hand of God only *after* all sin, sinners, and Satan himself are "devoured" by the "fire" that "came down from God out of heaven," and "*the first heaven and first earth were passed away*" (Rev. 21:1; 20:9).

With these plain Bible facts in mind, let us now read Mormonism's interpretation of the events of the millennial period.

"When Christ comes, the earth will be changed and so will all upon its face. It will become a terrestrial world then, and will so remain for 1,000 years; and all those

who have lived a telestial law will be eliminated. They will be as stubble and be consumed. *The earth will be cleansed* from its wickedness and passed into the terrestrial order. This will necessitate a change in the very elements of the earth, and also of its inhabitants; *yet they will still be mortal*. Those who belong to the terrestrial order will dwell upon the earth during this period. . . . Those who have kept the celestial law will come forth to meet him in the clouds preceding the resurrection of the terrestrial inhabitants.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 85, 86. (Italics supplied.)

“NON-MEMBERS OF CHURCH DURING MILLENNIUM. Some members of the Church have an erroneous idea that when the millennium comes all of the people are going to be swept off the earth except righteous members of the Church. That is not so. There will be millions of people, Catholics, Protestants, agnostics, Mohammedans, people of all classes, and of all beliefs, still permitted to remain upon the face of the earth, but they will be those who have lived clean lives, those who have been free from wickedness and corruption. All who belong, by virtue of their good lives, to the terrestrial order, as well as those who have kept the celestial law, will remain upon the face of the earth during the millennium.

“Eventually, however, a knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters do the sea. *But there will be need for the preaching of the gospel, after the millennium is brought in*, until all men are either converted or pass away. In the course of the thousand years all men will either come into the Church, or kingdom of God, or they will die and pass away. In that day there will be no death until men are old. Children will not die but will live to the age of a tree. Isaiah says this is one hundred years. *When the time comes for men to die, they will be changed in the twinkling of an eye*, and there will be no

graves.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 86, 87. (Italics supplied.)

As we have already noticed, the apostle Paul has told us that when this change is made in mortal man “in the twinkling of an eye,” *it will be at the coming of Christ* at “the last trump,” not some time later within the thousand-year period (1 Cor. 15:51, 52).

As already shown, the righteous will have been taken to heaven by the Saviour following the first resurrection at His coming, and the wicked will have been destroyed by the brightness of His coming. How, then, can “millions of people, Catholics, Protestants, agnostics, Mohammedans, people of all classes, and of all beliefs” still be living upon the face of the earth?

Note this statement again: “But there will be need of the preaching of the gospel, after the millennium is brought in, until all men are either converted or pass away.”

Again, President Smith writes: “*All those who have died in Christ shall come forth from the dead at His coming and shall dwell upon the earth as Christ shall be upon the earth during this millennium. They shall not remain here all the time during the thousand years, but they will mingle with those who are still here in mortal life. These resurrected saints and the Savior himself, shall come to give instruction and guidance; to reveal unto us the things we ought to know; to give us information concerning the work in the temple of the Lord so we may do the work which is essential to the salvation of worthy men.*”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 59. (Italics his.)

Compare this teaching with Jesus’ interpretation of His parable of the wheat and the tares: “Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit,

then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matt. 13:24-30).

"Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (verses 36-43).

The signs of the return of Jesus are distinctly proclaimed in Luke 21:25-36.

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the

powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

Matthew declared: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:30). "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (verses 37-39).

John the revelator also has graphically described the coming of Christ and the death of all the wicked:

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God" (Rev. 14:14-19).

And what did John explain the "winepress of the wrath of God" to be?

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: *and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.* And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

"And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may

eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (chap. 19:11-21).

The Scriptures do not teach that during the millennial period this earth will be the home of Christ and His people, for John describes it as a "bottomless pit" (chap. 20:3). The wicked will be "slain" and this world then will be in a chaotic condition. Jeremiah foretold in unmistakable language the condition of the earth at the return of Christ:

"I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, *lo, there was no man*, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a *wilderness*, and *all* the cities thereof were broken down *at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger*. For thus hath the Lord said, *The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end*" (Jer. 4:23-27).

The "full end" will come *after the close* of the thousand years of desolation. Thus Satan will have one thousand years to contemplate his own certain end.

The final and mightiest effort against the King of

heaven by Satan will be at the close of the thousand-year period, when he will lead forth the hosts of the wicked (who will have come forth in the second resurrection) in a massed attack against the city of God. At that time "fire . . . [shall come] down from God out of heaven," and shall devour Satan and his demon hosts, together with all the wicked human beings who have ever lived, because they have rejected the Lord's offer of mercy and salvation. Satan's punishment will doubtless last much longer than that of any others in the "lake of fire," but finally the words of Ezekiel concerning Lucifer will be fulfilled, that "it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. . . . *And never shalt thou be any more*" (Eze. 28:18, 19).

The Bible passages quoted above give a clear picture of the millennium, and of the final end of Satan and the wicked. This means that there will be *no* "mortality upon the face of the earth during the thousand years." During the millennium, *no* man, woman, or child will be found on the earth—from north to south, from east to west—who "will still be mortal." Nor will there be during that time one human being on the earth who is immortal. *They* will all have gone to heaven with Christ.

Not a single sermon will be preached on earth "after the millennium is brought in," for there will be no preachers there to preach. Satan and his host of evil angels will be there, but they have long since passed the possibility of conversion. No "instruction and guidance" will be given to man on the earth by the "resurrected saints and the Savior himself"; and no one will be giving "information concerning the work in the temple . . . which is essential to the salvation of worthy men." For all the temples on earth will have been shaken to the ground by the "great earthquake" by which all the "cities of the nations fell" (Rev. 16:18, 19).

Chapter 12

MORMONISM'S SALVATION BY WORKS

The Bible says, “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8, 9).

Compare the following statement by Joseph Fielding Smith with the above Bible text: “One of the *most pernicious doctrines ever advocated by man* is the doctrine of ‘justification by faith alone,’ which has entered into the hearts of millions since the days of the so-called ‘reformation.’”—*The Restoration of All Things*, p. 192. (Italics supplied.)

After declaring that the plan of salvation was made known in the preexistent state, the same doctrinal authority declares, “We were told that many would fail because they would yield to sin and would reject the counsels of the Father, *for their exaltation could only come on merit.*”—*The Way to Perfection*, p. 32. (Italics supplied.)

How do these statements harmonize with the above, and the following, statement of Paul, the great apostle of Christ? “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness *without works*, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered” (Rom. 4:6, 7).

To be sure, one who by faith accepts salvation through Christ will “do the works of the law”—not in order that he may be justified by doing them, but in demonstration of his love. Works are the fruitage of faith. “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). “I will shew thee my faith by my works” (James 2:18).

There is abundant evidence to show that there is such a Biblical doctrine as justification by faith alone. Perhaps the foremost example is the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43). It is quite universally accepted, the LDS included, that Christ promised everlasting life to the thief in response to his faith in Him as the Son of God. While hanging on the cross, the penitent thief accepted the Saviour’s love and assurance of pardon and peace through His atoning blood. The experience set forth in Ephesians 2:8 was the thief’s experience.

Where were the works of the thief on the cross? How did he “merit” salvation? There was no opportunity for works. Therefore, *he was justified by faith alone*, and will receive eternal life, just as it was promised him by his Saviour.

In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul places before all this great teaching of justification by faith, as well as the condemnation of any expecting salvation in the kingdom of God through works: “Therefore *by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight*: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to

declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the *justifier of him which believeth* in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: *but by the law of faith*. Therefore we conclude that a man is *justified by faith without the deeds of the law*. Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision [the Jew] by faith, and uncircumcision [the Gentiles] through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom. 3:20-31).

These words of Paul are in perfect agreement with his statement in the second chapter of Ephesians. When the Christian believer rightly understands and accepts this doctrine of justification by faith alone, he is eager to bear fruitage in the life through works of righteousness.

Through a hypothetical situation let us illustrate how justification by faith operates.

A man who, for almost a lifetime, has been controlled by sin feels impelled to enter a church sanctuary, where he listens to a religious service. So forcefully is the love of Christ presented from the pulpit that his heart is greatly touched, and he sees his life in its true relationship to the lovely character of the Lord Jesus. Sitting there in the church, he compares himself to the pure and spotless Son of God.

In true contrition, this repentant man bows his head in shame and lifts his heart in prayer to the Saviour, who, he has just learned, is more than willing to forgive his sins. For the first time he has heard the wonderful promise, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). He accepts this promise, as did the thief on the cross, realizing that "through him

[Christ] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). *At that very moment* that man becomes one with those who "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (verse 19).

He receives complete forgiveness for the "sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:25). He is, therefore, "justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (verse 28), because God, through Christ, is "the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (verse 26).

Like the thief on the cross, this man has not performed any works for his newly accepted Redeemer.

The meeting closes. He shakes hands with the minister at the door, thanking him for showing him the way to Christ and to everlasting salvation. With tears in his eyes, he walks away from the church, steps into the street, and is struck down by a speeding automobile, resulting in his instant death. Will this man be saved in the kingdom of God?

Yes, for *such is the way God's marvelous plan of justification by faith alone operates*, as taught in the Holy Scriptures.

But let us continue our example. Let us say that he was *not* struck by the automobile, but returned to his home fully determined to follow Christ all the way. It naturally follows that he will *show* his faith *by* his works (James 2:18), which works will be a direct result of his faith in Christ and his determination to follow Him as long as life shall last. He would be expected by God to diligently compare his own character and life with the example of Christ and, by His sustaining grace, live in harmony with God's holy and immutable law, the ten commandments.

Through the working of the Spirit of God on his heart, the man will now begin to overcome all the sinful habits of his lifetime. He will be baptized, and will arise

from the water to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). With the apostle Paul he will acknowledge: “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13, 14).

So then, the moment a penitent sinner discerns that Christ’s atonement is made in his behalf, and in commitment he accepts it as his only hope for this present and future life, God pardons his sins. *This is justification by faith.* At that moment, God imputes righteousness to the repentant sinner, placing to his credit in the books of heaven the perfect righteousness of Christ. The sinner is then justified before God and is accepted in His sight *as if he had never sinned.* What a transaction in favor of the sinner! What a priceless gift to man from God! This is what the apostle Paul meant when he said: “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5).

Then will come the works. Not works to *gain* righteousness—he has already been credited with that—but works of love that are spontaneous because he has been justified in the sight of God. Each day thereafter will be a day of progress in the perfecting of a noble character like unto Christ’s character, a day of relentless warfare, by enabling grace, against hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, a day of determined effort in progressing toward that holiness of life that will be after the similitude of Christ Jesus.

In confirmation of this, note again Ephesians 2:8, 9, quoted at the beginning of our chapter, and especially verse 10:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest

any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*, which God hath before ordained *that we should walk in them.*"

While justification is instantaneous, sanctification is the work of a lifetime. It is growing up into Christ, growing in grace, in willing and glad obedience to the will of God throughout our lives. It is being transformed into the likeness of Christ, partaking of His divine nature. It is the positive duty and the glorious privilege of every Christian to become "perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 4:12).

Justification and sanctification are to take place in this life. "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). There is no "second chance" in a future life. Actually, mankind is even now having its second chance.

The "first chance" was given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They failed. Then, in "the fulness of time," Christ came and died for the justification of humanity that we might have a "second" chance to become sanctified and holy in the sight of a holy God. We are privileged to have a part in this second chance so freely offered by the Lord through His perfect righteousness.

Justification by faith is an acquittal, a declaration of righteousness in the sight of God, because God, through Christ, made it so.

Surely it is not possible for a Christian to accept any teaching that in any way denies or condemns this doctrine that so beautifully and convincingly portrays God's unfathomable love and grace toward the sinner, and gives hope to the most despairing one who feels he has sold out to sin.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul makes clear his argument for justification by faith alone: "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the

flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his *faith* is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:1-8).

Of the declaration presented at the beginning of this chapter, that the doctrine of justification by faith alone is a "pernicious" doctrine, we point out that the teaching that salvation may be earned through works is not new. Is it not the old papal principle of trusting to good works for salvation? Is it not truly as unacceptable to the twentieth-century Bible Christian as it was to Martin Luther, who in the sixteenth century found it necessary, as a result of his intense study of the Scriptures, to turn his back upon the Roman Church, the church of his youth and young manhood; and who was suddenly galvanized by Paul's words, "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17)?

In the eighteenth century, John and Charles Wesley were victims of the dense darkness that had settled upon the state church in England. In their day the doctrine of justification by faith, so clearly taught by Martin Luther, had been almost forgotten. They found themselves seeking to gain salvation by works, as Luther himself had done some two centuries before. They, too, were struggling to secure the grace of God through rigorous self-denial, self-reproach, fasts, and prayers. However, John's contact with the Moravians convinced

him that he must renounce all dependence upon his own works for salvation and trust wholly in Christ, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

The doctrine of salvation through works, which is the very core of pagan religions, turns men's attention to their own puny efforts, and away from the great atoning work of the Saviour. It robs Christ of His glory and turns the hearts of men away from Him as their only hope of salvation.

Mormonism's teaching that one can trust to his own works for eternal salvation is one of the saddest teachings held by the LDS Church. It is sad because it attracts the sinner's eyes from Jesus as Saviour to himself and his own works. It is sad because it presents "another gospel" instead of the gospel of Christ, which "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein [in the gospel of Christ] is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:16, 17).

And what does Paul say to the Galatians of "another gospel"? "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-8).

The true gospel, then, is Christ-centered, not self-centered. It is salvation in Christ, not in any works that we may do.

Satan's one consuming purpose is to cast Christ, the Son of God, from His throne. Does not a doctrine of "salvation by works," such as is presented by Mormonism, tend to do just that?

But Christ, the Word of God, who shared the glory of God “before the world was” (John 17:5), “was made flesh” (chap. 1:14).

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Heb. 1:1-3; see John 1:1-3, 10; Col. 1:13-17; Eph. 3:9).

Through His incarnation Jesus became the one and only God-man. Deity and humanity were mysteriously combined into the one Person, Jesus Christ, and “the gift of God [which] is eternal life [comes only] through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). And through His victorious life, death, and resurrection, He will bring victory to those who believe on Him and live in obedience to His commandments.

Did Jesus receive His life from another? No. He plainly said, “I am the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25). In Him is life *original, unborrowed, underived*. And “he that hath the Son *hath* life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:12). Therefore, we must conclude that the deity of Christ is the believer’s assurance of everlasting life. Would we want to trust our eternal life to any other than the *Source* of life? Although as a member of the human family Jesus took on mortality, as God He was the channel of life to the entire world. He was not a created being, for divine nature had no beginning.

Christ is verily God from eternity to eternity. “But

unto the Son he [the Father] saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom" (Heb. 1:8).

"Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail" (verses 9-12).

We can say, then, with indisputable finality, that the infinite Christ is the immeasurable Christ. We cannot add up His existence in mathematical figures. His wisdom is inexhaustible. His love and nature are incomprehensible; His total existence impenetrable. And because Christ has "the power of an endless life" (chap. 7:16) He is indissoluble.

The glory of God was in Christ, the incarnate Son, for in both His natures, the divine and the human, Jesus was perfect, sinless. When the Saviour came into the world, He took the *nature* of man, but not the *sinfulness* of man.

There is, then, no everlasting life in any other, for Christ always was, and is, and always shall be the Fountain of life.

So, a person justified before God through faith in Christ alone is a recipient of *imputed righteousness*—that righteousness from the Lord that is *placed to his credit*. This can be experienced through faith alone. It cannot be gained through works on our part.

After one has received imputed righteousness and has become "one" with the heavenly Father and the Son, God daily *imparts* His righteousness to him so that he may overcome everything in his character that is unlike

Christ. This is *imparted righteousness*.

Summarizing, we find in Paul's Epistle to Titus the experience of every sinner saved by grace, and what is expected of him: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:3-7).

Verse 8 places "works" in proper relationship: "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which *have believed* in God might be careful to *maintain good works*. These things are good and profitable unto men."

Here, in these few verses, is Heaven's beautiful portrayal of imputed and imparted righteousness, step by step: "For we . . . *were* sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived" by sin, then "the kindness and love of God" came to us, and we were "justified by his grace" and became "heirs . . . of eternal life." This amazing new experience "poured . . . upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (R.S.V.) brings to us the imparted righteousness of God, which makes us "careful to maintain good works."

What a precious privilege this free gift of God's righteousness opens to every man. Think of it! Life never-ending—no sin, no sickness, no pain, no death—and fellowship forever with Jesus, who created all things, and who will make all things new for the joy and happiness of all who are saved.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the

first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 21:1-7). "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it" (verse 24).

I appeal to each one who reads these words to accept the free gift of our Saviour's righteousness, perhaps for the first time or as a renewed acceptance. It can only be accepted, for nothing in the plan of God makes it possible to merit such love. It cannot be earned; it is "the gift of God" (Rom. 6:23).

That love is extended to us because we are men and women made after His "likeness" (Gen. 1:26) and in need of salvation from sin. Let us receive it by simple faith.

Chapter 13

MORMONISM'S EXALTATION OF MAN

The very “foundation” of Mormonism is the belief that “the spirit of man . . . cannot die.” Upon that basic premise are built the major doctrines of the LDS Church. Let us read again from the writings of the “chief doctrinal authority” of the LDS Church, President Joseph Fielding Smith: “*The spirit of man is eternal and cannot die in the sense of ceasing to exist.*”—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, p. 218.

From this emphatic declaration—which Joseph Fielding Smith puts entirely in italics—run the spokes of the Mormon-doctrine wheel.

We all know the Genesis story: “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:15-17). Thus Adam and Eve were instructed *not* to partake of the tree of knowledge. That was the means by which God was to test their love and loyalty. They were plainly told that disobedience would bring death—“Thou shalt surely die”—literally, “dying thou shalt die,” apparently meaning that whenever they disobeyed, the process of

deterioration would begin in them.

In the third chapter of Genesis is the record that "the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, *Ye shall not surely die*: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and *ye shall be as gods*, knowing good and evil" (verses 1-5).

Throughout the history of the world millions of people have believed the lie that Satan told Eve some 6,000 years ago in the Garden of Eden.

Following that first lie, "Ye shall not surely die," Satan also declared to Adam and Eve, "Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (verse 5).

Now note these statements by Joseph Fielding Smith: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, basing its belief on divine revelation, ancient and modern, *proclaims man to be the direct and lineal offspring of Deity. God himself is an exalted man*, perfected, enthroned, and supreme. By his almighty power he organized the earth, and all that it contains, from spirit and element, which exist co-eternally with himself."—*Man: His Origin and Destiny*, p. 355. (Italics supplied.)

Back a few paragraphs we read, "Adam, our great progenitor, 'the first man,' was, *like Christ*, a pre-existent spirit, and like Christ he took upon him an appropriate body, the body of a man, and so became a 'living soul.' The doctrine of the pre-existence,—revealed so plainly, particularly in latter days, pours a wonderful flood of

light upon the otherwise mysterious problem of man's origin. *It shows that man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal body to undergo an experience in mortality. It teaches that all men existed in the spirit before any man existed in the flesh, and that all who have inhabited the earth since Adam have taken bodies and become souls in like manner.*—*Ibid.*, p. 354. (Italics supplied.)

"All men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother, and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity."—*Ibid.*, p. 351. (Italics supplied.)

Now we quote the prophet Joseph Smith, founder of the LDS Church. Under the heading "God An Exalted Man" he wrote, "I will go back to the beginning before the world was, to show what kind of being God is. What sort of a being was God in the beginning? Open your ears and hear, all ye ends of the earth, for I am going to prove it to you by the Bible, and to tell you the designs of God in relation to the human race, and why He interferes with the affairs of man.

"God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power, was to make himself visible,—I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form—like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with him, as one man talks and communes with another. [Italics his.]

"In order to understand the subject of the dead, for consolation of those who mourn for the loss of their friends, it is necessary we should understand the char-

acter and being of God and how he came to be so; *for I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see.* [Italics supplied.]

“These are incomprehensible ideas to some, but they are simple. *It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the character of God, and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another, and that he was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did; and I will show it from the Bible.*”—*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 345, 346. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. (Italics his.)

Again, in the LDS book *Articles of Faith*, by James E. Talmage, pages 442, 443 of the 1901 edition, we read: “In spite of the opposition of all other sects, in the face of direct charges of blasphemy, the Church proclaims the eternal truth, ‘*As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become.*’” (Italics his.)

Let us read further regarding this doctrine of exaltation: “Exalted beings, because they have proved themselves by obedience to ‘every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God,’ will become perfect and be like him, *and as heirs will become gods themselves.*”—Joseph Fielding Smith, *Man: His Origin and Destiny*, p. 532. (Italics supplied.)

Joseph Fielding Smith summarizes the Mormon belief that “exalted” man will become as God: “The Father has promised us that through our faithfulness we shall be blessed with *the fulness of his kingdom*. In other words we will have the privilege of becoming *like him*. *To become like him we must have all the powers of godhood; thus a man and his wife when glorified will have spirit children who eventually will go on an earth like this one we are on and pass through the same kind of experiences, being sub-*

ject to mortal conditions, and if faithful, then they also will receive the fulness of exaltation and partake of the same blessings. There is no end to this development; it will go on forever. *We will become gods and have jurisdiction over worlds, and these worlds will be peopled by our own offspring.* We will have an endless eternity for this.”—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, p. 48. (Italics his.)

We offered these quotations from authoritative LDS works with a minimum of comment to convey a correct picture of Mormon teaching on this vital subject. We have done this to give our readers a clear understanding (1) of the LDS teaching concerning the spirit of man, which allegedly “cannot die”; (2) of their belief that man will be exalted to godhood; (3) and that God Himself was once a man as we are now.

However, the mighty Creator, the God of the Bible, emphatically denies that He “was once a man like us,” or was “once as we are now” and is now “an exalted man.” Here is His declaration: “*Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.* I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour” (Isa. 43:10, 11). And again: “Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; *I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God*” (Isa. 44:6). “*I am God, and not man*” (Hosea 11:9).

In the Pentateuch Moses declares, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent” (Num. 23:19).

Students of the Bible understand that those who are “born of water and of the Spirit” (John 3:5) “become the sons of God” (chap. 1:12). “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have . . . received the Spirit of *adoption*, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be

that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:14-17).

Is not this God's plan for man—acceptance into the family of heaven and earth, *as a son or daughter by adoption* and as "joint-heirs" with Christ? What a wonderful relationship this is for every true follower of Christ.

But some may still ask, Surely the LDS Church cannot possibly mean that "to become like God" is for man eventually to attain *infinite power and wisdom*? Let the reader decide for himself as he reads these next words from the pen of the LDS Church's most recognized authoritarian on doctrine:

"ALL THAT THE FATHER HATH. Those who are faithful in obtaining the priesthood and magnifying their calling become members of the Church of the Firstborn, receiving all that the Father hath; and this is according to an oath and covenant that cannot be broken. Now, *how are they to receive all that the Father hath, if something is withheld? And if something is not withheld, how can they receive all that he hath and not become as he is, that is, be gods themselves?* . . .

"How can the saints receive of his fulness and be equal with the Lord and not be as he is, that is, gods?"

"The Father has promised through the Son that all that he has shall be given to those who are obedient to his commandments. *They shall increase in knowledge, wisdom, and power, going from grace to grace, until the fulness of the perfect day shall burst upon them.* They shall, through the glory and blessing of the Almighty, become *creators*. [Italics his.] *All power, and dominion, and might shall be given to them,* and they shall be the only ones upon whom this great blessing shall be bestowed."—Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, pp. 35, 36. (Italics supplied.)

Does this not teach complete equality with our great

Creator, the Lord God of heaven? But let us continue:

“EXALTATION: TO BECOME LIKE GOD. Those who *receive exaltation in the celestial kingdom are promised the fulness thereof. ‘All things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come.’* (Doctrine and Covenants 76:59) *Our Father in heaven is infinite; he is perfect; he possesses all knowledge and wisdom. However, he is not jealous of his wisdom and perfection, but glories in the fact that it is possible for his children who obey him in all things and endure to the end to become like him.*

“Man has within him the power, which the Father has bestowed upon him, so to develop in truth, faith, wisdom, and all the virtues, that eventually he shall become *like the Father and the Son*; this virtue, wisdom, and knowledge on the part of the faithful does not rob the Father and the Son, but *adds* to their glory and dominion. Thus it is destined that *those who are worthy to become his sons and joint-heirs with our Redeemer, would be heirs of the Father’s kingdom, possessing the same attributes in their perfection, as the Father and the Son now possess.*”—*Ibid.*, p. 35.

“SONS OF GOD BECOME GODS. *If the faithful, who keep the commandments of the Father, are his sons, then they are heirs of the kingdom and shall receive of the fulness of the Father’s glory, even until they become like the Father. And how can they be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect if they are not like him? . . .*

“Now, if they overcome all things, then there are not some things which they do not overcome. If these are to receive ‘of his *fulness* and of his *glory*,’ and if into their ‘hands the Father has given *all things*,’ then the Father has not withheld some of the fulness of his glory, or some things. And if they receive his fulness and his glory, and if ‘all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs,’ *how can they receive these blessings and not become gods? They*

cannot.”—*Ibid.*, p. 39. (*Italics his.*)

At this point let us ask: According to Mormonism, what is required of a person in this present life if he would receive this exaltation in the celestial kingdom? We quote further from Joseph Fielding Smith:

“ENDOWMENT AND SEALING PRECEDE SONSHIP. The Lord has given unto us privileges, and blessings, and the opportunity of entering into covenants, of accepting ordinances that pertain to our salvation beyond what is preached in the world; beyond the principles of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance from sin, and baptism for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost; and these principles and covenants are received nowhere else but in the temple of God.

“If you would become a son or a daughter of God and an heir of the kingdom, then you must go to the house of the Lord and receive blessings which there can be obtained and which cannot be obtained elsewhere; and you must keep those commandments and those covenants to the end. . . .

“The ordinances of the temple, the endowment and sealings, pertain to exaltation in the celestial kingdom, where the sons and daughters are. The sons and daughters are not outside in some other kingdom. The sons and daughters go into the house, belong to the household, have access to the home. ‘In my Father’s house are many mansions.’ Sons and daughters have access to the home where he dwells, and you cannot receive that access until you go to the temple. Why? Because you must receive certain key words as well as make covenants by which you are able to enter. If you try to get into the house, and the door is locked, how are you going to enter, if you haven’t your key? You get your key in the temple, which will admit you.”—Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 2, p. 40.

Consider what those statements mean. One of God’s

most precious promises to His people is John 14:1-3, from which President Smith has quoted. It reads: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Where the "mansions" are is where God dwells, that is, "in my Father's house." But, as we have read, Mormonism teaches that "you cannot receive that access until you go to the temple."

"You get your key in the temple" to enter God's "house." He who does not go to a Mormon temple to receive the "ordinances . . . endowment and sealings" and to become "a son or a daughter of God" and an "heir of the kingdom . . . *which cannot be obtained elsewhere,*" simply will be "outside in some other kingdom."

Are all the peoples of the world asked to believe that "sonship" with God depends upon access to a Mormon temple? Let us remember what Jesus said: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (verse 47).

But note that a temple marriage is also required:

"CELESTIAL MARRIAGE ESSENTIAL TO EXALTATION. Another thing that we must not forget in this great plan of redemption and exaltation, is that *a man must have a wife, and a woman a husband, to receive the fulness of exaltation.* They must be sealed for time and for all eternity in a temple; then their union will last forever, and they cannot be separated because God has joined them together, as he taught the Pharisees.

"Parents will have eternal claim upon their posterity

and will have the gift of eternal increase, if they obtain the exaltation. This is the crowning glory in the kingdom of God, and they will have no end. When the Lord says they will have no end, he means that all who attain to this glory will have the blessing of the continuation of the 'seeds' forever. Those who fail to obtain this blessing come to the 'deaths,' which means that they will have no increase, forever. *All who obtain this exaltation will have the privilege of completing the full measure of their existence, and they will have a posterity that will be as innumerable as the stars of heaven.*

"If you want salvation in the fullest, that is exaltation in the kingdom of God, so that you may become his sons and his daughters, you have got to go into the temple of the Lord and receive these holy ordinances which belong to that house, which cannot be had elsewhere. *No man shall receive the fulness of eternity, of exaltation, alone; no woman shall receive that blessing alone; but man and wife, when they receive the sealing power in the temple of the Lord, if they thereafter keep all the commandments, shall pass on to exaltation, and shall continue and become like the Lord.* And that is the destiny of men; that is what the Lord desires for his children."—Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, pp. 43, 44.

These are the beliefs of the LDS Church of *today*—in the last half of the twentieth century.

"EXALTATION AND THE CREATION OF WORLDS. Now, according to the teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, we worship our Heavenly Father who governs in our universe, and we do all that we do in the name of the Son. We are informed that there are many earths or worlds which have been created, and were created by the Son for the Father. This was, of course, before he was born a Babe in Bethlehem.

"Evidently *his Father passed through a period of mortality even as he passed through mortality, and as we all are doing.*

Our Father in heaven, according to the Prophet, had a Father, and since there has been a condition of this kind through all eternity, each Father had a Father, until we come to a stop where we cannot go further, because of our limited capacity to understand.—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 47.

Though it is true that man was God's supreme creation in this world, "crowned . . . with glory and honour" above all other creatures on earth, yet we are told by the psalmist that man was "made . . . a little lower than the angels" (Ps. 8:5). God greatly honored him from creation, for He gave him "dominion . . . over all the earth," even on the very day he was created (Gen. 1:26). Man, who was formed "in the image of God" (verse 27), was created to *glorify God—not himself!* Only as far as *this* earth was concerned, did the Lord "put all things under his [man's] feet," as the psalmist describes it in Psalm 8:6.

Man alone, of all created beings on this earth, was given the power of choice, thus setting him apart from, and above, all the animal creation. In this way he was honored and exalted. However, *every careful Bible student knows that man will never be exalted to equality with the great Creator of heaven and earth.* The ambition to be equal with God was first found in the heart of Lucifer before he was cast out of heaven, and it is still re-echoed in false teachings today. The prophet Isaiah declared, "*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High*" (Isa. 14:12-14).

But, for all of Satan's proud spirit and unholy ambition to "be like the most High," what is his inevitable

fate? "Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?" (verses 15-17).

The prophet Ezekiel graphically describes the history and fate of Lucifer in a double-application prophecy of the king of Tyrus; beginning when Lucifer faithfully served God in the courts above. "Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. *Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.* By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, *and thou hast sinned:* therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick" (Eze. 28:11-18).

These verses describe Lucifer as the one who was “perfect” in his “ways” from the day of his creation, and as having been “in Eden the garden of God.” But God declares that he lost his perfection when “iniquity was found” in him. The mighty Creator put His finger on Lucifer-turned-Satan and said, “Thou hast sinned: . . . I will destroy thee, . . . [because] *thine heart was lifted up* . . . [and] thou hast corrupted thy wisdom. . . . Therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall *devour* thee, and *I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth* in the sight of all them that behold thee. . . . And *never shalt thou be any more*” (verses 16-19).

The end of Satan, the originator of sin, the instigator of “violence” throughout the earth, the promoter of the ambition to equality with God and to exalt oneself to be “like the most High,” is here forcefully brought to view. When that happens the Son of God will destroy Satan himself and will “destroy the *works* of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

John, the revelator, pictures Satan’s destruction in “the lake of fire.” He states that Satan “shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:8-10).

Satan will come to his end in “eternal fire.” This will not be a fire that will burn eternally, any more than the “*eternal* fire” that destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah is still burning today: “Even as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them in like manner,

giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, *are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*" (Jude 7). Eternal fire is fire which is under the control of God, that *no man* can extinguish. Those two cities are believed to have been at what is now the southern end of the Dead Sea.

But let us read further from *Doctrines of Salvation*:

"CHRIST CREATED MANY WORLDS. Under the direction of his Father, *Jesus Christ created this earth*. No doubt *others helped him*, but it was Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, who, under the direction of his Father, came down and organized matter and made this planet, so that it might be inhabited by the children of God.

"Jesus Christ is the light and the life of men; he was a Creator before this world was made."—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 74.

We maintain, on authority of the Holy Scriptures, that Jesus Christ was not *a* Creator; He was *the* Creator (See John 1; Col. 1; Heb. 1); nowhere in the Bible is there a suggestion that "others helped him." It is clear that Joseph Fielding Smith did not have the Holy Spirit or God the Father in mind when he made the statement, as we shall presently see. The Word of God emphatically states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *with* God, and the Word *was* God. The same was in the beginning with God. *All things were made by him*; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

"For *by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible*, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: *all things were created by him*, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:16, 17).

Again: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his

Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, *by whom also he made the worlds*; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Heb. 1:1-4).

The teachings of God in the Bible never minimize nor detract from the creative power and glory of Christ. But let us quote further from Joseph Fielding Smith: "We are not concerned so much just now with the works he then performed, nor are we concerned just now with these other worlds and their inhabitants.

"This we know, and that will suffice until all things are revealed, the inhabitants of these worlds created by Jesus Christ, are begotten sons and daughters unto God. *Life did not originate here. Man did not first come into existence here.* We are told by our Father in heaven that *man is eternal*; that he has always existed, and that *all life on this earth came from elsewhere*. We may not be able to comprehend all this now, but the time will come in the providence of the Lord, when all these things shall be made known and we shall have knowledge in the fullness.

"ADAM AND OTHERS HELPED IN CREATION. It is true that Adam helped to form this earth. He labored with our Savior Jesus Christ. I have a strong view or conviction that there were others also who assisted them. Perhaps Noah and Enoch; and *why not Joseph Smith*, and those who were appointed to be rulers before the earth was formed? We know that Jesus our Savior was a Spirit when this great work was done. He did all of these mighty works before he tabernacled in the flesh."—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, pp. 74, 75. (Italics his.)

Here we are told that "man is eternal; that he has

always existed," and that "Adam helped to form this earth. He labored with our Savior Jesus Christ."

Adam, formed from the dust of the ground by the hand of the Creator, was yet an assistant to Christ in the creation of this earth. And if Adam, "perhaps Noah and Enoch" and "why not Joseph Smith?"

Let us continue: "STATUS OF ADAM IN PRE-EXISTENCE. *The first man placed upon the earth was a perfect being, a son of God. He was Michael, the Archangel, who had reached great distinction and power before he ever came to this earth; and who helped to frame this earth while he was yet a spirit, just as our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was a spirit before he was born in Bethlehem.*

"Michael, after being placed upon this earth, is known as Adam. He received his tabernacle of flesh from the dust of *this* earth. . . . Through him we get these tabernacles of flesh and bones, tabernacles for our spirits. Our spirits are the begotten sons and daughters of God; so is Adam's, but he was sent here for the purpose of peopling this earth with bodies of flesh and bones."—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 90.

Here is another opportunity to compare a teaching of Mormonism with the Bible. In this statement Adam is called "Michael," and even "Michael, the Archangel."

Note, now, Jude 9: "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."

We learn here that Michael is "the archangel." First Thessalonians 4:16 tells us that "the voice of the archangel" is heard at the second coming of Christ, which voice calls the dead from their graves. Jesus declared that "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear" the voice of the Son of man—referring to Himself (John 5:28).

Let us look at the facts we have just noted in these

texts in reverse order: The voice of Jesus calls the dead from their graves. But that voice is called "the voice of the archangel." And the archangel is named Michael. Thus, Michael is none other than Christ.

To set forth the doctrine that "all exalted men become gods," the LDS Church uses the words of Christ in John 10:34-36: "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"

Jesus was quoting from Psalm 82:6. The psalm itself is an arraignment of unjust human judges who are spoken of as "gods" in the sense of their high position as judges. This is further clarified in verses 1 and 2: "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. How long will ye *judge unjustly*, and accept the persons of the wicked?" Then verse 6, which was quoted by Jesus to the skeptical Jews, "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High."

We read further from the pen of Joseph Fielding Smith: "Joseph Smith taught a plurality of gods, and that man by obeying the commandments of God and keeping the whole law will eventually reach the power and exaltation by which he also will become a god."—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 98.

But the Christian who believes the Word of God can know there is but one God. The apostle Paul closes every door to any misunderstanding or misinterpreting of other verses when he writes, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:5, 6).

Only by adoption do we become members of the family of God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of

God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:14, 15).

The only one we, as followers of Christ, should seek to exalt is God Himself, as the psalmist enjoins: “Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy” (Ps. 99:5). It is not in God’s plan for man to seek exaltation for himself.

To be *with* God in His everlasting kingdom will be enough! To become a god as He is God should not be in the heart of any follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our everlasting Redeemer.

Chapter 14

MORMONISM'S THREE DEGREES OF GLORY

Mormonism's doctrine of three degrees of glory is founded upon the church's belief that all mankind will live eternally "somewhere in the great heavenly kingdoms," and that "salvation is of varying stages or degrees."—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, pp. 21, 13.

But let Joseph Fielding Smith explain the church's stand:

"ALL SAVED EXCEPT SONS OF PERDITION. It is a very pleasing and consoling thing to know that the Lord will save *all* his children, excepting the very few who wilfully rebel against him. When his children have paid the penalty of their transgressions, they shall come forth from the clutches of the second death to receive a place somewhere in the great heavenly kingdoms, which are prepared for them with their several glories and degrees of salvation.

"It is the purpose of the Almighty to save all mankind, and all will enter into his kingdoms in some degree of glory, except sons of perdition who sin beyond the power of repentance and redemption, and therefore cannot receive forgiveness of sins. All the rest shall be saved, but not all with the same degree of glory or exaltation. Every man will be judged according to his works, his opportunities for receiving the truth, and the

intent of his heart.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 20, 21.

It is, of course, the Lord's heartfelt desire and purpose that all shall be saved to dwell eternally with Him. This we read in Peter's epistle to the church:

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

The Lord Jesus opened salvation's door for “the whole world” by becoming our “advocate with the Father” and making reconciliation in tasting “death for every man” (1 John 2:2, 1; Heb. 2:9).

The sad fact is that so many turn away from that open door and refuse Heaven's gift of everlasting life, which will be full of inexpressible surprises and unspeakable joys for all who receive it. “As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor. 2:9). What will it be to be there! May it be the joy of every one who reads these words to have eternal fellowship with the Lord.

A few paragraphs later we shall discuss Mormonism's theory that “all,” wicked and righteous, shall be saved. But first, let us read the church's description of celestial, terrestrial, and telestial salvation, which are the “three degrees of glory” as taught by Mormonism.

“CELESTIAL SALVATION. Those who keep the full law and obey all the commandments of God are heirs of *full salvation* in the celestial kingdom, the glory of which the sun is spoken of as being typical. These overcome all things and receive a fulness of the blessings, power, and glory of the Father. All who have died without a knowledge of the gospel, or the opportunity to receive it, who would have accepted it had the opportunity been presented to them while living, are also heirs of this kingdom.

“TERRESTRIAL SALVATION. Into the next, or terrestrial, shall enter all those who die without law; ‘they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh; Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it’; ‘honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men’; those who were not willing to receive a fulness of his glory; and those who were not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; ‘wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.’”—*Ibid.*, pp. 21, 22.

Now read the description of the “ungodly” and the “filthy” whom the LDS Church declares are also to be “heirs of salvation.”

“TELESTIAL* SALVATION. Those who enter into the telestial kingdom, where their glories differ as do the stars of heaven in their magnitude, and who are innumerable as the sands of the seashore, are the ungodly, the filthy who suffer the wrath of God on the earth, who are thrust down to hell where they will be required to pay the uttermost farthing *before* their redemption comes. These are they who receive not the gospel of Christ and consequently could not deny the Holy Spirit while living on the earth.

“They have no part in the first resurrection and are not redeemed from the devil and his angels *until* the last resurrection, because of their wicked lives and their evil deeds. Nevertheless, even these are heirs of salvation, but before they are redeemed and enter into their kingdom, they must repent of their sins, and receive the gospel, and bow the knee, and acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world.

* *Telestial*: Not a Bible or dictionary word, but found in the revelations to Joseph Smith recorded in the book *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 76:81ff.

"In both the terrestrial and the telestial glories the inhabitants thereof will be limited in their powers, opportunities, and progression, because, like the sons of perdition, 'they were not willing to enjoy that which they might have received.'"—*Ibid.*, p. 22.

But Paul makes it clear, in 1 Corinthians 15:40-54, we now have earthly bodies and that when Jesus comes He will change these, which go into corruption at death, to celestial or heavenly bodies that will be immortal.

We have just read the statement by Joseph Fielding Smith that those who have lived "wicked lives" and "are the ungodly" and even "the filthy" are "heirs of salvation" and shall eventually "enter into the telestial kingdom." But is this the gospel of Christ? The apostle Paul declares, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). The ungodly, the filthy, the wicked are not those who believe. They are those who shall perish. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

In this teaching regarding "heirs of salvation" in a telestial kingdom, do we not have another insinuation that sin is a part of God's eternal plan, and that all shall be saved to enjoy eternal salvation "somewhere" in the heavenly kingdoms? This diminishing of the enormity of sin is not a part of God's plan of salvation or of His gospel to the world. And the Bible presents positive proof that it is not, for we read: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

If Satan was the originator of sin—and he was; if Satan is today the defender of sin—and he is; then it is unthinkable for the genuine follower of Jesus Christ to

accept the doctrinal postulate that any provision for eternal sin is a part of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reading further, we discover Mormonism's ideas on "telestial damnation": "All who have been filthy and who would not receive the truth and have not had the testimony of Jesus Christ, must *suffer the torments of the damned until they are purged from their iniquity*, for the blood of Jesus Christ will not cleanse them from their sins without their own individual suffering."—*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 22.

Is this another teaching akin to purgatory? Surely it is not the doctrine of the Bible, for we read: "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that *the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*" (Rom. 2:4). It is not God's punishment, it is His goodness that wins men's hearts from sin. And there are other texts to consider:

In Christ "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7).

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, . . . which he [Christ] hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

The Word of God teaches that any sinner who turns to Him in honest repentance will receive complete forgiveness through Christ, and will be accepted by Him as a child of God, regardless of his past life. "For there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:11). "And, ye masters, do the same things unto them [your servants or slaves], forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him" (Eph. 6:9; see Isa. 1:18).

As to Mormonism's claim of three degrees of glory, the Bible emphasizes that those who "are saved" will be only those whose names "are written in the Lamb's book

of life" (Rev. 21:24, 27). These are the righteous, and they do not in any sense include the unrepentant wicked or the ungodly, for verse 27 states: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie."

Every one who accepts the gift of eternal salvation will receive celestial glory, for, according to one Webster's dictionary, celestial means "heavenly; divine; of a heavenly nature."

Heaven is where God is, for we address Him: "Our Father *which art in heaven*" (Matt. 6:9). And every human soul who is saved will live in the celestial, or divine, presence of God.

Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

Could the truth be plainer than these scriptures make it? Through God's plan of salvation either we shall be saved to live with God eternally or we shall be lost and *perish*.

What about Mormonism's "celestial kingdom"? For a more complete understanding of this teaching we shall quote rather extensively from Joseph Fielding Smith:

"THIS EARTH TO BECOME CELESTIAL. This earth is going to become a celestial body and is going to be a fit abode for celestial beings *only*; the others will have to go somewhere else, where they belong. *This earth will be reserved for those who are entitled to exaltation*, and they are the *meek*, spoken of by our Savior, who shall inherit the earth. When the Lord said the meek shall inherit the earth, he had reference to those who are willing to keep the commandments of the Lord in righteousness and

thus receive exaltation.”—*Ibid.*, p. 26.

“A man who has accepted the testimony of Jesus in the flesh may inherit *any* of the three kingdoms, according to the degrees of faithfulness he has shown in keeping the commandments of the Lord. If he keeps the full law, he shall be entitled to enter the celestial kingdom.”—*Ibid.*, p. 28.

“NO ADVANCEMENT FROM LOWER TO HIGHER. It has been asked if it is possible for one who inherits the telestial glory to advance in time to the celestial glory?

“The answer to this question is, *No!*

“The scriptures are clear on this point. Speaking of those who go to the telestial kingdom, the revelation says: ‘And they shall be servants of the Most High; *but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, worlds without end*’ (*Doctrine and Covenants* 76:112).”—*Ibid.*, p. 31.

The next statement has been quoted before. We repeat it to emphasize our present point.

“CELESTIAL MARRIAGE ESSENTIAL TO EXALTATION. Another thing that we must not forget in this great plan of redemption and exaltation, is that *a man must have a wife, and a woman a husband, to receive the fulness of exaltation*. They must be sealed for time and for all eternity in a temple; then their union will last forever, and they cannot be separated because God has joined them together, as he taught the Pharisees.

“Parents will have eternal claim upon their posterity and will have the gift of eternal increase, if they obtain the exaltation. This is the crowning glory in the kingdom of God, and they will have no end. When the Lord says they will have no end, he means that all who attain to this glory will have the blessing of the continuation of the ‘seeds’ for ever. Those who fail to obtain this blessing come to the ‘death,’ which means that they will have no increase, forever. *All who obtain this exaltation will have the privilege of completing the full measure of their*

existence, and they will have a posterity that will be as innumerable as the stars of heaven.

“If you want salvation in the fullest, that is exaltation in the kingdom of God, so that you may become his sons and his daughters, you have got to go into the temple of the Lord and receive these holy ordinances which belong to that house, which cannot be had elsewhere. *No man shall receive the fulness of eternity, of exaltation, alone; no woman shall receive that blessing alone; but man and wife, when they receive the sealing power in the temple of the Lord, if they thereafter keep all the commandments, shall pass on to exaltation, and shall continue and become like the Lord. And that is the destiny of men; that is what the Lord desires for his children.*”—*Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

We are told that not only are there degrees of glory, but also that in the celestial kingdom itself there are three degrees or conditions:

“LIMITATION ON CELESTIAL PROGRESSION. In section 131 [of *Doctrine and Covenants*], the Lord has said, through the Prophet Joseph Smith: ‘In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood (meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage); And if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the *end of his kingdom*; he cannot have an increase.’ So, we see, *even in the celestial, some are barred and cannot go on to exaltation.*

“Further light is thrown on this in section 132: ‘For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they *cannot* be enlarged, but *remain* separately and singly, *without exaltation*, in their saved condition, *to all eternity*; and from henceforth *are not gods*, but are angels of God *forever and ever.*’ These angels, spoken of here, include those who enter the celestial kingdom but do not gain the highest glory in that kingdom.”—*Ibid.*, p. 32.

"I wonder if we realize the greatness of our callings—yes, all the elders in this Church—do they realize that they hold the Melchizedek Priesthood? Do they know that through their faithfulness and their obedience, according to the revelations of the Lord, they are *entitled to receive all that the Father has*—to become the sons of God, joint-heirs with our Elder Brother, Jesus Christ, *entitled to the exaltations in the celestial kingdom*? Do we realize that? We, too, if we do realize it, should be like those of former days, and every man that hath this hope in him, will purify himself even as Christ is pure. . . .

"As sons and daughters then, we are heirs of his kingdom and shall receive *by right* the fulness of the glory and be *entitled* to the great blessings and privileges which the Lord in his mercy has revealed to us in the dispensation of the fulness of times."—*Ibid.*, p. 38. (Italics supplied.)

What does Mormonism believe this may lead to? In answering, we use quotations previously offered which are also appropriate here.

"SONS OF GOD BECOME GODS. *If the faithful, who keep the commandments of the Father, are his sons, then they are heirs of the kingdom and shall receive of the fulness of the Father's glory, even until they become like the Father. And how can they be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect if they are not like him? . . .*

"Now, if they overcome all things, then there are not some things which they do not overcome. If these are to receive 'of his *fulness* and of his *glory*,' and if into their 'hands the Father has given *all things*,' then the Father has not withheld some of the fulness of his glory, or some things. And if they receive his fulness and his glory, and if 'all things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs,' *how can they receive these blessings and not become gods? They*

cannot.”—*Ibid.*, p. 39.

“ALL THAT THE FATHER HATH. Those who are faithful in obtaining the priesthood and magnifying their calling become members of the Church of the Firstborn, receiving all that the Father hath; and this is according to an oath and covenant that cannot be broken. Now, *how are they to receive all that the Father hath, if something is withheld? And if something is not withheld, how can they receive all that he hath and not become as he is, that is, be gods themselves?* . . .

“*How can the saints receive of his fulness and be equal with the Lord and not be as he is, that is, gods?*”

“The Father has promised through the Son that all that he has shall be given to those who are obedient to his commandments. *They shall increase in knowledge, wisdom, and power, going from grace to grace, until the fulness of the perfect day shall burst upon them.* They shall, through the glory and blessing of the Almighty, become *creators*. All power, and dominion, and might shall be given to them, and they shall be the only ones upon whom this great blessing shall be bestowed.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 35, 36.

“*We are sons and daughters of God in the spirit.* Through the atonement of Jesus Christ, we receive the resurrection, the spirit and the body being united inseparably, never to be divided, so that we will never die again. We thus become immortal, and if we keep the commandments which are given us, we will inherit celestial glory. When we receive this great blessing, *we will be sons of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.*”

“The Father has promised us that through our faithfulness we shall be blessed with *the fulness of his kingdom*. In other words we will have the privilege of becoming *like him*. *To become like him we must have all the powers of godhood; thus a man and his wife when glorified will have spirit children* who eventually will go on an earth like this one we are on and pass through the same kind of

experiences, being subject to mortal conditions, and if faithful, then they also will receive the fulness of exaltation and partake of the same blessings. There is no end to this development; it will go on forever. *We will become gods and have jurisdiction over worlds, and these worlds will be peopled by our own offspring.* We will have an endless eternity for this.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 47, 48.

We have clearly seen here that Mormonism’s ultimate in the celestial kingdom is for man to receive “all that the Father hath,” and to “be as he [God] is, that is, gods” with “the gift of eternal increase,” and “a posterity that will be as innumerable as the stars of heaven.” “This,” Mormonism teaches, “is the crowning glory in the kingdom of God.”

Will not the genuine crowning glory be, rather, for everyone redeemed from this world of sin, to have the glorious privilege of eternal fellowship with Christ, our wonderful Saviour, and *never* to be shut away from His holy and lovely presence throughout the eternal ages? Is not the maximum joy that can be anticipated by the human mind that of knowing our kind heavenly Father face to face and doing His will and His pleasure through the ceaseless ages of eternity? (Rev. 21:1-4.)

Surely we should not ask “to receive all that the Father hath.” Nor are we “entitled” to anything from the Lord. It is only through His rich grace and His supreme unselfish love that His goodness comes to us. We should not aspire to “become” a god. Our greatest desire should be to “become like the Father”—*in character*.

Chapter 15

MORMONISM'S TEMPLES

The 6-million-dollar Mormon temple near Los Angeles, California, and other imposing temples in various parts of the world have caused people to wonder, "Why such costly structures? What beliefs of Mormonism call for such an outlay of funds?" We shall endeavor to answer these, and other, questions in this chapter.

Joseph Fielding Smith throws some light on the above questions:

"PURPOSES OF TEMPLES. Why do we build temples? It is because the Lord commands it. For what purpose are they built? In order that sacred ordinances and covenants necessary to the exaltation in the celestial kingdom may be bestowed upon all those who are *worthy* of the exaltation."—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, p. 243.

We have already discussed some of the temple procedures, one being baptism for the dead taken up in chapter 10.

Another of Mormonism's "sacred ordinances" performed in LDS temples is celestial marriage. Celestial marriage, or marriage for eternity, as the LDS Church teaches it, has no validity outside a Mormon temple:

"KEYS REQUIRED FOR CELESTIAL MARRIAGE. Now marriage for eternity can be performed only in the temples. It cannot be performed anywhere else. Au-

thority by which such marriages are solemnized must be vested in the one who performs the ordinances, by virtue of appointment by the one who holds the keys.

"There is but one man living on the earth at a time who holds the keys of this binding or sealing power. No other man has the right to officiate in a marriage, or sealing ceremony, for time and all eternity, unless he has obtained the direct appointment from the one who holds the keys of this power."—*Ibid.*, pp. 73, 74.

To Mormons, the man who has this authority is, of course, the successor to Joseph Smith. This man is always the president of the church.

Further expressing the importance of celestial marriage as performed in the temple, Joseph Fielding Smith explains:

"MARRIAGE: THE COVENANT OF EXALTATION. Marriage, as understood by Latter-day Saints, is a covenant ordained to be everlasting. It is the foundation for eternal exaltation, for without it there could be no eternal progress in the kingdom of God. . . .

"There is no ordinance connected with the gospel of Jesus Christ of greater importance, of more solemn and sacred nature, and more necessary to the eternal joy of man, than marriage. . . .

"Marriage is a principle which, when entered, presents more serious problems than any other. It should be received in the spirit of patience and love, even that greater love which comes through the power of the Holy Spirit."—*Ibid.*, p. 58.

Note this declaration from the pen of Mormonism's chief doctrinarian:

"Marriage is the grandest, most glorious, and most exalting principle connected with the gospel. It is that which the Lord holds in reserve for those who become his sons and daughters; all others are servants only, even if they gain salvation. They do not become members of the house-

hold of our Father and our God, if they refuse to receive the celestial covenant of marriage.”—*Ibid.*, p. 59.

Consider again that last sentence: “They do not become members of the household of our Father and our God, if they refuse to receive the celestial covenant of marriage.” But we fail to find anywhere in the Bible that we become members of the “household of our Father” through such a marriage covenant. The apostle Paul points out the scriptural way: “But now *in Christ Jesus* ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. . . . *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.* Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, *and of the household of God*” (Eph. 2:13-19).

Is it, then, through a celestial marriage that we become members of the “household of God”? No; it is through Jesus Christ. Jesus cares for our every need, and we are “*complete in him*” (Col. 2:10). It is through Him that we are reconciled to God. Christ is the One “in whom we have redemption” and “the forgiveness of sins,” thus establishing us as “sons and daughters” of God. The Lord has no other way (Col. 1:14; 2 Cor. 6:18).

According to these Biblical statements, marriage—or unmarriage—has nothing to do with believers’ condition in eternity and becoming “members of the household of our Father and our God.” That access is *through Christ* in this life! He has said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). All of God’s promises to the redeemed come through Christ (Gal. 3:28). The only condition is to accept the gift of Christ’s righteousness, and “follow his steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

As we continue with our study of this subject we shall discover the why of “celestial marriage” in Mormonism’s temples.

Joseph Fielding Smith continues: "It fills my heart with sadness when I see in the paper the name of a daughter or a son of members of this Church, and discover that she or he is going to have a ceremony and be married outside of the temple of the Lord, because I realize what it means, that *they are cutting themselves off from exaltation in the kingdom of God.*"—*Ibid.*, p. 60.

Furthermore, Mormonism holds that any marriage consummated outside an LDS temple keeps the contracting parties from becoming "gods." They will remain "angels" and "ministering servants" for eternity: "Therefore, when *they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage*; but are appointed *angels in heaven*; which angels are *ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory.*

"*For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever*' (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 132:16, 17)."—*Ibid.*, p. 61.

On the other hand, Mormonism teaches that celestial marriage performed in a temple makes man and wife gods for all eternity:

"CELESTIAL MARRIAGE MAKES GODS IN ETERNITY. But if we are married for time and for all eternity and it is sealed upon our heads by those who have the authority so to seal, and *if we then keep our covenants and are faithful to the end*, we shall come forth in the resurrection from the dead and receive the following promised blessings:

"Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be *above all*, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have *all power*, and the angels are subject unto them.'

“Who are the angels? Those who would not abide the law.

“‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory.’

“Abide what law? The law of the new and everlasting covenant, which is all the covenants.

“‘For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto *the exaltation and continuation of the lives*, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me.

“‘But if ye receive me in the world, then shall ye know me, and shall receive your *exaltation*; that where I am ye shall be also.’”—*Ibid.*, pp. 62, 63. These LDS teachings are based on *Doctrine and Covenants*, section 132, verses 20-23.

We read further: “MARRIAGE AND BECOMING SONS OF GOD. The gift promised to those who receive this covenant of marriage and *remain faithful to the end*, that they shall ‘have no end,’ means that they shall have the power of *eternal increase*. *Only those who have this power will truly ‘know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent.’* Others may *see* the Lord and may be *instructed by him*, but they will not truly *know* him or his Father unless they become *like* them.

“Who desires to enter the eternal world and be a *servant*, when the promise is held out that we may be sons and daughters of God? Yet there will be the vast majority who will enter into the eternal world as *servants*, and not as *sons*, and this simply because they think more of the world and its covenants, than they do of God and his covenants; simply because in their blindness of heart, they refuse to keep these sacred and holy commandments. Oh, what bitterness there will be in the day of judgment, when every man receives his reward according to his works!

“NO EXALTATION WITHOUT MARRIAGE. Since mar-

riage is ordained of God, and the man is not without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord, *there can be no exaltation to the fulness of the blessings of the celestial kingdom outside of the marriage relation*. A man cannot be exalted singly and alone; neither can a woman. Each must have a companion to share the honors and blessings of this great exaltation. Marriage for time and all eternity brings to pass the crowning glory of our Father's kingdom, by which *his children become his heirs*, into whose hands he gives all things."—*Ibid.*, pp. 64, 65.

If there can be "no exaltation without marriage," and no "marriage for eternity" without temples, we must inquire, How many Mormon temples are there around the world to care for these requirements? As of 1963, the answer was fifteen, according to the LDS Church publication *The Improvement Era* (November, 1963, p. 957). According to the weekly *Church News*, March 19, 1977, published by The Deseret News of Salt Lake City, "There are 16 [temples] in use, with four more either under construction or in the planning stages."

Does this mean that celestial salvation has been and is mainly for the select few—mostly for people within easy access to the United States and Canada where thirteen of the eighteen existing temples are situated;*

* A list of Mormon temples, given in a recent (probably 1976, as no date is given) special magazine issue titled *Temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, page 20, are: Kirtland, Ohio; Hawaii; Nauvoo, Illinois; St. George, Utah; Salt Lake City; Los Angeles; Oakland; Logan, Utah; Alberta, Canada; Idaho Falls; Washington, D.C.; Manti, Utah; Mesa, Arizona; Ogden and Provo, Utah; Switzerland; New Zealand, London, England; São Paulo, Brazil; Tokyo, Japan.

Of the fourteen Mormon temples built in the United States, one, in Kirtland, Ohio, is the property of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the one built in Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1848 "fell prey to the wanton act of an incendiary. A tornado in May, 1850, blew the walls to the ground" (*The Improvement Era*, November, 1955, p. 820).

and for those who have the means and time to make a pilgrimage to some perhaps distant LDS temple?

Think of the hundreds of millions of human beings in the world who, if these teachings of Mormonism were true, would be almost certain to end up with a salvation more dependent on the performance of someone other than Jesus Christ, either in this present life or during the coming millennium. (See chapters 9 and 10.) All of Europe presently has access to but two temples, one in Switzerland, and the other in London, England. The other four existing temples outside the U.S.A. are in Alberta, Canada; New Zealand; Brazil; and Japan, as of this date (1977).

We now see the reason for Mormonism's temples and the connection between its doctrine of "*celestial marriage*" and "*exaltation*," which is the basis for its claim to attain to godhood. For the church declares that if the followers of Joseph Smith "are married for time and for all eternity," and keep the covenants of the LDS Church in implicit faithfulness "to the end, . . . [they] shall come forth in the resurrection." And, "then shall they be gods, because they have all power . . ."

But in contradistinction to this is the plain Bible teaching that "the children of the resurrection" shall be "equal unto the angels," and shall be "the *children* of God," but never equal with God, nor shall they ever "have all power." Said Jesus: "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain *that world*, and the resurrection from the dead, *neither marry, nor are given in marriage*: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:34-36).

Therefore, how can a "covenant of marriage" entered into within Mormon temple walls give the "power of eternal increase"?

Mormonism claims that “outside of the celestial kingdom there is no family organization.” Following this statement Joseph Fielding Smith continues:

“We believe that the family will go on. I get a great deal of comfort out of the thought that *if I am faithful and worthy of an exaltation, my father will be my father, and I will be subject to him as his son through all eternity*; that I will recognize and know my mother and she will be my mother in all eternity; and my brothers and sisters will be my brothers and sisters for all eternity; and that my children and my wives will be mine in eternity. I don’t know how some other people feel, but that is a glorious thought to me. That helps to keep me sober.”—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, p. 67.

In the following quotation we can better understand the relationship between Mormonism’s teachings concerning *preexistence* and *celestial marriage*:

“SPIRIT CHILDREN IN THE RESURRECTION. Those who attain to the exaltation in the celestial kingdom shall have the power of *eternal increase of posterity*, and they shall be ‘above all, because all things are subject unto them.’ Children born to parents who have obtained, through their faithfulness, the fulness of these blessings, shall be *spirit children* not clothed upon with tabernacles of flesh and bones. *These children will be like we were before we came into this world.* We are taught in the scriptures that we are the offspring of God in the spirit, Jesus Christ being the Firstborn Son of our Eternal Father in that spirit world.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 68, 69.

Now, carefully note these words from the pen of Mormonism’s chief doctrinal authority:

“TEACH LAW OF ETERNAL MARRIAGE TO CHILDREN. May all Latter-day Saint fathers and mothers see to it that they teach their children the sacredness of the marriage covenant. Let them impress upon their children that in no other way than by honoring the cove-

nants of God, among which the covenant of eternal marriage is one of the greatest and most mandatory, can they obtain the blessings of eternal lives.

“If they refuse to receive this ordinance and other blessings of the house of God, then shall they be cut off from these higher blessings. *They shall wear no crown; they shall have no rule and sway no scepter; they shall be denied the fulness of knowledge and power*, and like the prodigal son, they may return again to their Father’s house, but it will be *as servants*, not to inherit as *sons*.”—*Ibid.*, p. 75.

This conclusion is not in accordance with the story of the prodigal son. It was the son’s *intention* to say to his father, “Make me as one of the hired servants” (Luke 15:19). However, when he returned home, his father did not give him the opportunity to make the statement, but declared him to be a son, and not a servant: “For *this my son* was dead, and is alive again” (verse 24).

The great heart of God is filled with love toward every wayward man or woman, and He invites each one to return to His household as a son or daughter. (See John 1:12; 2 Cor. 6:16-18.) It seems clear that all who do return in true contrition, *whether married or single*, shall receive salvation in the presence of God and of Christ. And with that salvation, they are accepted as “children of God: . . . and joint-heirs with Christ,” finally to be “glorified together” with all the redeemed of earth (Rom. 8:14-17).

The Bible declares that *all* the righteous shall dwell in the very presence of God after their resurrection. Such scriptures as John 14:1-3 and Revelation 21:1-3, 23-26 are evidence of this. Those who are saved are to “receive a *crown* of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:4).

What of Mormonism’s former doctrine of polygamy as it relates to the LDS teachings on preexistence and celestial marriage? The Bible makes it clear that in every

recorded instance of polygamy on the part of any Bible character—Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, and others—sorrow, unhappiness, confusion, and conflict accompanied the practice. These marital or family difficulties were the consequence of disregarding God's original plan for the home as instituted in the Garden of Eden, when He gave Eve to Adam. In the New Testament all elders or bishops—the terms are used synonymously—and deacons were instructed to be men having but “one wife.” “A bishop then must be blameless, *the husband of one wife*, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach.” “Let the *deacons* be the husbands of *one wife*, ruling their children and their own houses well” (1 Tim. 3:2, 12). It is to be noted that *deacons* were married men, not boys as young as 12 years of age.

Probably a small library of books has been written over the past century on Mormonism's original stand on polygamy. Therefore, only a few thoughts will be presented here, of which the most important, no doubt, is in answer to the question What was the real purpose behind Mormonism's teaching in favor of polygamy? The answer to this question is not generally understood outside the LDS Church. However, let us first consider the following:

The *Book of Mormon* condemns polygamy, thus placing it in contrast to Section 132 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*:

“And now I make an end of speaking unto you concerning this pride. And were it not that I must speak unto you concerning a *grosser crime*, my heart would rejoice exceedingly because of you. But the word of God burthens me because of your grosser crimes. *For behold, thus saith the Lord: This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures, for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of the*

things which were written concerning David, and Solomon his son. Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord.”—*Book of Mormon*, Jacob 2:22-24. (Italics supplied.)

Now note *Doctrine and Covenants*, section 132, verses 37-39:

“Abraham received concubines, and they bear him children, and it was *accounted unto him for righteousness*, because they were given unto him, and he abode in my law, as Isaac also and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded; and because they did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels, but are Gods.

“David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon and Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin, save in those things which they received not of me.

“*David’s wives and concubines were given unto him, of me*, by the hand of Nathan, my servant, and others of the prophets who had the keys of this power; and in none of these things did he sin against me, save in the case of Uriah and his wife; and, therefore he hath fallen from his exaltation, and received his portion; and he shall not inherit them out of the world; for I gave them unto another, saith the Lord.” (Italics supplied.)

Those statements are quoted from two volumes declared by the LDS Church to be the scriptures *on an equality with the Bible*. The one declares the status of polygamy to be “righteousness,” while the other declares it to be “abominable before me, saith the Lord.”

As already stated, a careful student of the Bible will discover that in each recorded instance of any follower

of God entering into a polygamous liaison the result was unhappiness, sorrow, and misery. For instance, Abraham had been promised seed “as the stars of the heaven” (Gen. 22:17). In his and Sarah’s impatience, and with an obvious mistrust of God’s power to fulfill that promise, the patriarch accepted his wife’s suggestion that he raise up seed by means of Sarah’s handmaid, Hagar. The descendants of Hagar’s son, Ishmael, were the Ishmaelites, who were ever afterwards a thorn in the flesh to Israel. Ishmael is depicted in the Bible as “a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren” (chap. 16:12).

Yet we read in *Doctrine and Covenants*, section 132, verses 34, 35: “God commanded Abraham, and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife. And why did she do it? Because this was the law: and from Hagar sprang many people. This, therefore, was fulfilling among other things, the promises. Was Abraham, therefore, under condemnation? Verily I say unto you, Nay; for I, the Lord, commanded it.”

Where in the Bible is there a command from God giving Hagar to Abraham to wife? It is true that after Abraham had entered into the polygamous marriage. God graciously kept His promise to bless Abraham’s seed, even though the Ishmaelites became an ungodly people. Verse 34, as quoted above from *Doctrine and Covenants*, states that “from Hagar sprang many people.” Yes, but what kind of people? Just such as are described in Genesis 16:12, quoted above.

Polygamy was a curse and a sorrow to David, and also to his son Solomon. At the beginning of this world God’s beautiful plan of monogamy, which cannot be improved upon, was instituted in the giving of Eve to the first man, Adam. And Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called

Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:23, 24).

God, through Moses, condemned polygamy: "Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time" (Lev. 18:18).

Mormonism teaches that Abraham is already exalted and sitting upon his throne somewhere in the kingdom of God: "Abraham received all things, whatsoever he received, by revelation and commandment, by my word, saith the Lord, and hath entered into his exaltation, and sitteth upon his throne."—*Doctrine and Covenants*, 132:29.

Does this agree with the Bible? The Bible says, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:8-10).

The final verse of the same chapter reads, "God having provided some better thing for us, that *they* [all the faithful mentioned in Hebrews 11, including Abraham] *without us should not be made perfect*" (verse 40). Therefore, Abraham is neither in "his exaltation" nor sitting "upon his throne."

The answer to our major question, What was the purpose behind Mormonism's teaching in favor of polygamy? reveals a strong connection with the church's teaching concerning preexisting spirits. We present a statement from Brigham Young, second president of the LDS Church, in context, made against the practice

of birth control, quoted by Joseph Fielding Smith in his *Doctrines of Salvation*:

“‘There are multitudes of pure and holy spirits waiting to take tabernacles, now what is our duty? To prepare tabernacles for them; to take a course that will not tend to drive those spirits into the families of the wicked, where they will be trained in wickedness, debauchery, and every species of crime. *It is the duty of every righteous man and woman to prepare tabernacles for all the spirits they can.*’”—Vol. 2, p. 88. (Italics his.)

Doubtless, then, originally the doctrine of polygamy was to hasten greatly the carrying out of the plan “to prepare tabernacles” for those preexistent spirits. However, we have already learned that the Bible teaches that there are no “spirits waiting to take tabernacles.” *They simply do not exist.* Therefore the doctrine of polygamy as taught by Mormonism during the nineteenth century was not needed.

Does the LDS Church officially teach or practice polygamy today? No. And the practice probably will not again be officially endorsed. Only a new “revelation” given to the president of the church could reverse the manifesto on plural marriage proclaimed by President Wilford Woodruff in 1890:

“*Discontinuance of Plural Marriage.*—The official act terminating the practice of plural marriage among the Latter-day Saints was the adoption by the Church, in conference assembled, of a manifesto proclaimed by the President of the Church. The language of the document illustrates the law-abiding character of the people and the Church, as is shown by the following clause:—‘Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of last resort, I [President Wilford Woodruff] hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence

with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise.' In the course of a sermon immediately following the proclaiming of the manifesto, President Woodruff said regarding the action taken:—'I have done my duty, and the nation of which we form a part must be responsible for that which has been done in relation to that principle' (i.e., plural marriage).”—*The Articles of Faith*, 1901 edition, p. 440. (See also pages 524, 525 of 1960 edition.)

Here are views of Joseph Fielding Smith as expressed under the heading "Tragedy of Broken Homes," with which we wholeheartedly agree:

"Throughout our land we see the tragedy of broken homes, fathers and mothers separated, children denied the natural affections. Children have a right to the blessings coming from this sacred union. They are entitled to the love and care of faithful parents, and the happiness and devotion which true worship brings.

"When these blessings are lost, the whole community suffers and the integrity of government is weakened. It is a shame and a disgrace that so much evil is coming out of broken homes, and this comes largely because we have forgotten God and our obligations to serve and honor him. Truly we have much room for repentance and a return to the simple worship of true Christianity."—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 2, p. 80.

With President Smith we call upon every family that has broken apart, or that has drawn apart, even in the slightest way, to invite into its family circle Jesus Christ with His great love and healing power. Regardless of the one at fault, whether husband or wife, each should ask forgiveness of the other and discover the peace and happiness that can come from Him. Try Him, for He is the Prince of Peace, and the Healer of all broken hearts and homes.

God's unfathomable love encompasses every soul,

every wrongdoer, every seeker for His righteousness, regardless of circumstances. And let us again remember that His Holy Book portrays the beautiful truth that through Christ we may become “fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,” and members, through adoption and sonship, into “the whole family in heaven and earth” (Eph. 2:19; 3:15).

Those who, through the Holy Spirit, learn to hate sin and love righteousness, accepting the Lord Jesus Christ and His gift of never-ending salvation, will have everlasting joy in His heavenly kingdom. For it is written, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor. 2:9). We commend you “unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, [to whom] be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen” (Jude 24, 25).

Chapter 16

THE MORMON LORD'S DAY

On the front flap of the dust jacket of *Answers to Gospel Questions*, volume 1, we read, “*Answers to Gospel Questions* by President Joseph Fielding Smith deserves wide reading by all members of the Church who wish to receive final answers to their questions.” To these works, Volume 1 and Volume 2, published by the Deseret Book Company in 1957 and 1958, we may rightfully turn for Mormon doctrine. We shall go mainly to these, and to the LDS tract “The Lord’s Day,” by Elder Brigham H. Roberts, in search of the church’s answers to the question “Why do the Mormons keep Sunday?”

“The Lord’s day was, of course, Sunday, and on this day the Latter-day Saints have been commanded to observe the weekly Sabbath. So far as the Latter-day Saints are concerned, the Lord has spoken. This settles the question.” This emphatic declaration comes from the pen of Mormonism’s “chief doctrinal authority,” Joseph Fielding Smith, his *Answers to Gospel Questions*, volume 2, page 59, 1958.

In the Foreword of that same work we read: “The admonition from President Smith’s Introduction to his first volume of *Answers to Gospel Questions* is repeated: ‘The reason for these answers to questions is to en-

deavor to settle once and for all time the problems discussed, which occur and re-occur so frequently, yet are answered in the revelations in the Standard Works.’”

Among the various religious doctrines in the world today, one question that gives great concern to many Christians who genuinely desire to serve the Lord is “Which day of the week is the true Sabbath of the Lord, the day every Christian should keep as sacred?” What is Mormonism’s answer to this question?

Let us carefully note again the above statement by Joseph Fielding Smith: “The Lord’s day was, of course, Sunday, and on this day the Latter-day Saints have been commanded to observe the weekly Sabbath. So far as the Latter-day Saints are concerned, the Lord has spoken. This settles the question.”

It may seem comforting to have this important question settled with such a simple statement. It is not that simple, however, for here we are dealing with one of the ten commandments of God’s great moral law, the same law that the apostle Paul declared to be “holy, . . . and just, and good” (Rom. 7:12). It is the same law, so perfect in composition, that points out sin to the sinner: “What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (verse 7). And John wrote: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4).

The psalmist had much to say regarding God’s law. “Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.” “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” “My tongue shall speak for thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.” “I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord; and thy law is my delight” (Ps. 119:142, 165, 172,

174). "The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness" (Ps. 111:7, 8). And finally, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. 19:7).

"All of the Ten Commandments are everlasting covenants," Joseph Fielding Smith affirmed.—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 153. Does he really mean this? Let us find out.

An LDS member sent the following question to President Smith: "My neighbor . . . says that the Latter-day Saints are not true Christians because they desecrate the true Sabbath which is Saturday and has been from the beginning and that man has no right to change it. He maintains that it was on the seventh day that the Lord rested from his labors when he created this earth, and this was established to be perpetuated through the ages, and the pope of Rome changed it to Sunday, and the Protestants have followed this to their condemnation. What answer do we have to this statement?"—*Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 2, p. 58.

President Smith responded: "The complete answer to these questions is found in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, section 59. This revelation was given [to Joseph Smith] on Sunday, August 7, 1831, in Jackson County, Missouri. In this revelation the Lord promised the members of the Church who sought inheritances in Missouri that he would abundantly bless them if they would covenant with him to keep his commandments. They would be crowned with blessings from above, 'yea and with commandments not a few, and with revelations in their time—they that are faithful and diligent before me.' After making this promise the Lord reiterated commandments from the Decalogue given on Sinai, and added this commandment concerning the Sabbath day:

"7. 'Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things.

"8. 'Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

"9. 'And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;

"10. 'For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High;

"11. 'Nevertheless thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days and at all times;

"12. 'But remember that on this the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord.

"13. 'And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart that thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full.'"—*Answers to Gospel Questions*, pp. 58, 59.

Following this statement is President Smith's definition of the Lord's day, according to Mormonism's understanding of this revelation, which we have quoted above.

Then he continues, "Perhaps this is as far as we need to go in defense of our observation of the Sabbath day on the first day of the week, but it would not satisfy our correspondent if we stopped here. Moreover it will be of general interest to all members of the Church to have some additional discussion."—*Ibid.*, p. 59.

We find it strange to interpret these verses, found in the revelation of Joseph Smith, as being Sunday, the first day of the week. Note the phrase in verse 9, "my holy day," and "the Lord's day," in verse 12. Understand clearly that nowhere in the Holy Scriptures is

Sunday, the first day of the week, ever spoken of by the Lord, the Old Testament prophets, as "the Lord's day," or "my holy day." In fact, the designation "my holy day" is found only in connection with the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week.

"And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

"If thou turn away thy foot from *the sabbath*, from doing thy pleasure on *my holy day*; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

"Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 58:12-14).

When the Lord spoke these words through the Old Testament gospel prophet, there was, of course, no question whatever as to which day of the week was the Sabbath. The seventh-day Sabbath was "my holy day."

Now, let us go back to the Sabbath of Creation, the first Sabbath of the newly created world. After outlining the six days of Creation in Genesis 1:1-30, the account says: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day" (verse 31). Continuing, the story adds:

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

"And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which

God created and made" (Gen. 2:1-3).

And where do we find the Sabbath? In the fourth commandment, in the very heart of the law of God: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath *of the Lord thy God*: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Ex. 20:8-11).

Mormon authorities acknowledge that there is no conclusive proof in the Bible that either Christ or the apostles changed the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first.

In the tract "The Lord's Day," already referred to, Elder Brigham H. Roberts used certain verses in the New Testament in his endeavor to prove that either Christ or the apostles changed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day. He states on page 4: "But we desire to point out the evidence we have (1) from the New Testament, and (2) from the practice of the early Christian Church, for observing the first day of the week as a day of public worship, sanctified and set apart as the 'Lord's Day.' By doing so we shall be able to show at least that there is a very strong probability that the change from the seventh to the first day of the week was made by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, after His resurrection; that it was perpetuated by His apostles and the early Christian Church; and then, in conclusion, shall cite the revelation referred to which, to the Latter-day Saints, changes this 'probability' into the fact and confirms with divine sanction our custom of worshiping on the first day of the week. By pursuing this course we shall draw the strong probability to be de-

rived from the scriptures and the practice of the early Church to the support of the revelation referred to, while the revelation, as already indicated, will transform the 'probability' of the New Testament scriptures into positive fact."

There are but eight New Testament passages that specifically mention the first day of the week. Elder Roberts cites four of them: John 20:19, 20; verse 26; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2. We shall examine them one by one.

1. John 20:19, 20: "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

"And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

These verses explicitly state that the disciples were assembled "for fear of the Jews." They were fearful that the same thing that had happened to their Saviour might happen to them. They most certainly were not there for Sabbath worship, for they did not yet know that Christ was risen. It was not until Jesus "stood in the midst" of them that they acknowledged Him as the resurrected Christ.

2. Verse 26: "And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you." Notice also Mark 16:14: "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."

In all seriousness we ask, Where is first-day Sabbathkeeping indicated in these verses?

We quote further from Elder Roberts: "Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not present at this [first mentioned] meeting nor would he believe the account delivered to him of it by his fellow apostles, but declared he must see the print of the nails in the Master's hand, and thrust his hand into His side before he could believe. '*And after eight days,*' (italics his) *which of course brings us again to the first day of the week* (italics supplied); 'His disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.' He then dispelled the doubts of Thomas, and did many other things which are not written" (John 20:24-30).

Joseph Fielding Smith follows this same reasoning: "There is evidence that the members of the Church following the resurrection of Jesus changed their Sabbath from the last to the first day of the week and that Christians have followed it ever since. It is universally conceded that our Savior was in the tomb during the Jewish Sabbath, and that he came forth on the early morning of the first day of the week. All four of the evangelists have written that it was early on the morning of the first day when Jesus appeared to some of his disciples, and in the evening of that same day, when they were gathered with the doors shut for fear of the Jews, he appeared again and permitted them to handle, or feel, the marks of the wounds in his hands, side, and feet. On this occasion he instructed them. It was eight days later, or on the first day of the week when he appeared again and gave them further instruction and chided Thomas for his unbelief. This would indicate that the Lord himself had changed the date of the Sabbath, and from that time forth it should be the first day of the week. It is true that there is not much said in the New Testament about the change of the Sabbath, but common things seldom get frequent mention.

There are references, however, which point definitely to the fact that the time of the Sabbath had been changed to the Lord's day.

"In the book of Acts this is recorded:

3. "'And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight' (Acts 20:7).

"SACRAMENT ADMINISTERED ON SABBATH DAY. It should be conceded that they did not break bread, or, in other words, administer the sacrament, except on the Sabbath day. It also seems to be significant that it was on the first day of the week that Paul counseled the Corinthian members of the Church that each should 'lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come' [1 Cor. 16:2]. Likewise that the Lord would give to John the great revelation on the Lord's day, or the first day of the week, saying: 'I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book.'" [Rev. 1:11]—*Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 2, pp. 61, 62.

Does the breaking of the bread make a day the Sabbath? If so, *every* day is the Sabbath, for this breaking of bread was not something that the apostles did on only one day of the week. It was done *daily* as they went from place to place meeting with the believers. We learn this from *Acts 2:46*:

"And they, continuing *daily* with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." This verse of Scripture clearly answers President Smith's statement just quoted.

4. 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you

lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”

Citing these verses as evidence of a change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day is also done by other Sunday-keeping churches. A Christian does not do his bookkeeping on the Sabbath, to discover how much to “lay by him in store.” Do not these verses show that Sunday, the first day of the week, is *not* the Sabbath of the Lord? For the Sabbath was already past, and the day following the Sabbath was suggested by the apostle Paul as the appropriate time to do their bookkeeping, to discover what they should put aside for the good of the poor, “as God hath prospered” them during the previous week.

Four more passages in the New Testament, all found in the Gospels, mention the first day of the week. These texts are not cited by Elder Roberts. The first three are: Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1, 2, 9. Note how they declare that the Sabbath was already past.

Matthew 28:1: “In the *end of the sabbath*, as it began to dawn toward *the first day of the week*, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.”

Mark 16:1, 2, 9: “And *when the sabbath was past*, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

“And very early in the morning *the first day of the week*, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.”

“Now when Jesus was risen early *the first day of the week*, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.”

What have we read in these verses? That “the sabbath was past”; that the first day of the week “began to dawn” in the “*end of the sabbath*.”

The fourth scripture mentioning the first day of the week, with the verses that precede it, is clear and

conclusive as to which day is the true Sabbath of the New Testament.

Luke 23:54-56: "And that day was the preparation, *and the sabbath drew on.*

"And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

"And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and *rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.*"

According to *what* commandment? The fourth commandment of the Decalogue.

Luke 24:1: "Now upon *the first day of the week*, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them."

This text, by its reference to the first day of the week, tends to confirm the seventh day as the Sabbath.

These verses describe the preparation day as the day *before* the Sabbath, which was, and still is, the sixth day of the week, now known as Friday. They describe the resting *on* the Sabbath day "according to the commandment." Thus the "first day of the week" *follows* the true seventh-day Sabbath.

Could Brigham H. Roberts actually have believed that any of these verses, or the aggregate of them, proved conclusively that the Sabbath was changed by Christ or the apostles? And let us note, he did not examine several texts that tend to disprove his theory. Let us read from his own pen, beginning on page 10 of his tract "The Lord's Day":

"Yet after all this is admitted, and the strength of the argument is very great in my judgment, *it must still be confessed that it falls somewhat short of being absolutely conclusive. It cannot be made out clearly and positively that Jesus or the apostles by direct, official action authorized the*

observation of the first day of the week as a day of public worship, dedicated to the service of God, and designed to take the place of the Jewish Sabbath. The most that can be claimed for the evidence here adduced—and it is the strongest if not all that can be marshalled in support of the proposition—is that it is PROBABLE [emphasis his] that such a change was instituted.” (Italics supplied.)

Can any follower of the Lord Jesus Christ allow his relationship with God to rest upon such a probability?

Elder Roberts then quotes Rev. Baden Powell, professor of geometry at Oxford University, who says, “‘To those Christians who look to the written word as the sole authority for anything claiming apostolic or divine sanction, it becomes peculiarly important to observe that the New Testament evidence of the observance of the Lord’s day amounts merely to the recorded fact that the disciples did assemble on the first day of the week, and the PROBABLE [emphasis his] application of the designation of the Lord’s day to that day.’ (Kitto’s *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, Art. “Lord’s Day.”)”

On page 11 of his tract, Elder Roberts refers to a Roman Catholic source regarding scriptural evidence for keeping Sunday as the Sabbath:

“That Catholics regard what is written in the New Testament as insufficient to justify them in the observance of the first day of the week instead of the seventh is evident from the fact that they appeal to the tradition of the church or ‘the unwritten word of God’ in justification of their practice, and upbraid Protestants for their rejection of the authority of tradition, which alone, in their view, justifies the change from the seventh to the first. The author of the Catholic work, ‘End of Religious Controversy,’ after citing the scripture commanding the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath, then says:

“‘Yet with all this weight of scripture authority for keeping the Sabbath or seventh day holy, Protestants of

all denominations make this a profane day, and transfer the obligation of it to the first day of the week, or Sunday. Now what authority have they for doing this? None whatever, except the unwritten word, or tradition of the Catholic church; which declares that the Apostles made the change in honor of Christ's resurrection and the descent of the Holy Ghost on that day of the week'” (letter 11).

Continuing, Elder Roberts makes this statement: “It is this element of uncertainty in the evidence, and the consequent inconclusiveness in the argument that those who contend for the seventh day as the Sabbath of the Lord take advantage of; but, as stated in the beginning, the Latter-day Saints need not share the embarrassment that other Christians generally feel over the question, for the Lord has set the matter at rest by a revelation in the last days to His church.” He then quotes the LDS work *Doctrine and Covenants*, section 59:8-13, which we have already noted.

Elder Roberts concludes: “This is in clear allusion to the first day of the week and thus the matter is set at rest. The observance of the ‘Lord’s day’ as the day sacred to the worship of Almighty God, so far as the Latter-day Saints are concerned, does not rest upon the ‘probability’ that it was of divine or apostolic institution, as is the case with Protestant Christendom; nor does it rest upon the ‘tradition’ of the church that it was of apostolic institution, as is the case with the Catholic Church; but the observance of that day comes to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by direct appointment of the Lord by revelation to the head of the Church in the present new dispensation of the gospel; and that revelation transforms the ‘probability’ that the first day of the week was substituted for the old Jewish Sabbath, into a certainty.”—“The Lord’s Day,” pp. 10-12.

Does Elder Roberts imply that the Sabbath command was of so little importance in the eyes of God, and to the spiritual needs of man for whom it was made, that it was allowed to go into virtual decay, remaining "the old Jewish Sabbath" from the first century till Joseph Smith's day?

If neither Jesus nor the apostles in the first century "by direct, official action" changed the "Jewish Sabbath" to the first day of the week, are we *to believe that for eighteen long centuries the universal church of Christ was left uninformed as to the true Sabbath?*

It is surprising to note that, after Elder Roberts devotes twelve pages of his tract in an effort to develop logical evidence that the Sabbath was changed by Christ and His apostles, he closes his argument by quoting Anthon H. Lund, of the First Presidency of the LDS Church in the amazing conclusion that, after all, as "it is impossible for all to keep the Sabbath day at the very same time over the globe . . . the important question seems to be, *not so much the exact time as the fact that one day in every seven is set apart to be a day of rest.*"—*Ibid.*, pp. 12, 13.

So, are we to conclude that the particular day we keep really does not matter after all, as long as we keep "one day in every seven"? Joseph Fielding Smith contends, on the other hand, that the one in seven *must be* "Sunday, and on this day the Latter-day Saints have been commanded to observe the weekly Sabbath." God created a round world, and would He not expect us to keep His Sabbath when it comes to us?

In his opening remarks in the tract "The Lord's Day," Brigham H. Roberts declares: "The acceptance by the Latter-day Saints of what is usually called the 'Christian Sabbath,' or 'Lord's Day,' as the proper day of special service and worship of the Lord is sometimes challenged. Such acceptance is challenged as being in

violation of one of the Ten Commandments—the fourth—which directed ancient Israel to keep holy the Sabbath day—the seventh day of the week; and which, it is held, was designed to be a perpetual law unto all who accept God as Creator and Law-giver.

“This question is raised not only against the Church of the Latter-day Saints but against all Christendom, Catholic and Protestant alike, who accept the first day of the week or Sunday as the Christian Sabbath instead of the Jewish Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. The question is raised by one of the minor sects of Christendom, ‘The Seventh Day Adventists.’ The distinguishing characteristics of this sect are that they believe in the personal and glorious coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; and that the holy day of worship appointed of God is the seventh day of the week instead of the first. Hence their name—‘Seventh Day Adventist.’

“Owing to the fact that modern Christians quite generally deny the continuation of revelation after the days of the apostles, and as they cannot point to any direct revelation, or positive apostolic institution in the New Testament by which the first day of the week was substituted for the old Jewish Sabbath, the seventh day, which Jesus during His lifetime honored by observing, the Adventists have other Christians at somewhat of a disadvantage in this controversy. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, however, need not be embarrassed by the arguments of Adventists, since the Church of Christ in this last dispensation has the warrant of God’s word, by direct revelation, for keeping holy the ‘Lord’s Day,’ that is, the first day of the week, as a day of public worship and thanksgiving, a holy Sabbath unto the Lord. It is not our intention, however, to avoid a discussion of the question by thus placing it on entirely new ground, and making the success of the issue depend upon one’s ability to make it clear that God

has given such a revelation, although, that is a position that can be consistently taken by our Church" (pages 3, 4).

God gave to man the seventh-day Sabbath at the close of Creation week, which was long before there were any people known as Jews. Therefore the seventh-day Sabbath should not be spoken of as the "Jewish Sabbath." Are not the Ten Commandments for all peoples?

As has often been the case in discussing the Sabbath, proponents of Sunday as the day of worship do not agree among themselves. Compare these statements made by Joseph Fielding Smith with one by Elder Brigham H. Roberts:

"Those who believe that the Sabbath should be on Saturday have made a fetish of the Sabbath day. They have, like the Pharisees and Sadducees of old, measured man to the length of the procrustean bed and condemn all others who may be just as devout as they. They have forgotten, it seems, the counsel of our Lord: 'And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath' [Mark 2:27, 28].

"Being the Lord of the Sabbath he had the divine right to change the day, and that is exactly what he has done."—*Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 2, pp. 59, 60.

But Brigham H. Roberts admits, "It cannot be made out clearly and positively that Jesus or the apostles by direct, official action authorized the observance of the first day of the week as a day of public worship, dedicated to the service of God, or designed to take the place of the Jewish Sabbath. The most that can be claimed for the evidence here adduced—and it is the strongest if not all that can be marshalled in support of the proposition—is that it is PROBABLE that such a change was instituted."—"The Lord's Day" (tract), pp. 10, 11.

We recall that President Smith declared that the Mormon Lord's Day revelation was given to Joseph Smith on "Sunday, August 7, 1831." We repeat: Would it not be a most serious omission on the part of God to wait 1,800 years, from the time of Christ till Joseph Smith's day, to reveal to His church that Sunday was the "Lord's Day"? Did not Jesus have a multitude of opportunities to make it known to His disciples at the beginning of the Christian era? And if He had done so, then would they not have recorded this important information in their Epistles to the churches?

Again, President Smith reverts to the argument that no one can be sure which is the first or the seventh day today. He states: "No one knows, and no one without revelation from the Lord would know which day is the first and which is the last in our present reckoning." He makes the further declaration: "In our Bible as it has come down to us, there is little evidence that there was a Sabbath observance before the Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai."—*Ibid.*, p. 60.

But actually there is strong evidence that the Sabbath was well known and kept prior to Mount Sinai. Exodus 16 shows us that Israel was given minute instructions concerning preparation for, and keeping of, the Sabbath: "And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the *sixth* day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day" (verses 28-30). This occurred *before* the ten commandments were given in written form at Mount Sinai. Moreover, the seventh-day Sabbath was established as a God-blessed and God-sanctified day at the close of Creation week, which was approximately 2,500 years before the Exodus. Therefore, it is not a "Jewish

Sabbath” as termed by Brigham H. Roberts. It is “the sabbath of the Lord,” as the fourth commandment of the Decalogue explicitly declares. And Jesus says that “the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath” (Matt. 12:8; cf. Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5).

The fact that God tested the children of Israel prior to giving the ten commandments at Sinai indicates that they knew of the Sabbath law: “Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no” (Ex. 16:4).

Again, the ten commandments must have been in existence before they were heard at Mount Sinai, “for where no law is, there is no transgression” (Rom. 4:15), and the Bible records many acts that were clearly recognized as transgressions before Sinai.

The very first word of the fourth commandment itself is *remember*. “**Remember** the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” This is evidence that Israel knew of the Sabbath prior to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. Would God ask them to remember something of which they did not already have knowledge?

Joseph Fielding Smith states, “Because of faulty measuring of time, days have been added to the calendar.”—*Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 2, p. 61. If the calendar, or the weekly cycle that the whole world follows today, is faulty and undependable, does this not make the first day as uncertain as the seventh? At the beginning of the chapter we quoted President Smith as saying “The Lord’s day was . . . Sunday, and on this day the Latter-day Saints have been commanded to observe the weekly Sabbath.” But if the argument that the calendar is faulty were valid, would this not also make invalid the Mormon claim for the keeping of Sunday?

What of the argument that the calendar is unde-

pendable? When the change was made from the Julian to the Gregorian system of calculation ten days were dropped. This was done by making Friday, October 15, follow Thursday, October 4, so as to rectify an accumulation of error amounting to ten days. This correction affected only the *dates* of the month on the calendar and *not the days* of the week. The weekly cycle—the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh days of the week—which had come down from the first week at Creation—*was not altered in any way. No change in the cycle of the week has ever been made through any corrections made in the calendar.* One need only turn to the faithful Orthodox Jews, who have always kept the seventh-day Sabbath. Would it not be impossible for millions of Jewish people to have lost count of the Sabbath, which falls on the seventh day? Also, if we can know which day is the first day of the week, can we not know which is the seventh, for does not the seventh day of one week always precede the first day of the next week?

The seventh-day Sabbath, instituted by the Creator Himself on the original seventh day of Creation week, is wonderfully unique. Nothing in the heavenly bodies or elsewhere in nature marks off the seven-day week. The sun and moon give us the length of the day, month, and year. Nothing but God's seventh-day Sabbath marks off the week. Nearly every nation under heaven—whether Christian or non-Christian—follows this cycle of the seven-day week, as God gave it to man in the beginning. And had the human family always kept the seventh-day Sabbath, as God intended, as a memorial of His creative power, there would never have been an atheistic nation or people, for every person would have recognized God as Creator. The seven-day week is a religious establishment, whether or not men wish to admit it. God set the cycle of the seven-day week in motion some six thousand years ago. It was measured off by the original

Sabbath. It is still measured off by that same sacred day.

The week exists only because God gave the seventh-day Sabbath to man to be a blessing to him, for "the sabbath was made *for* man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27). This is just as true today as it was six thousand years ago. It is Biblically true; it is historically true. The Bible teaches it; history proves it.

Any person who understandingly enters into loyal Sabbathkeeping on the day God "blessed" and "sanctified," calling the Sabbath "a delight, the holy of the Lord," and who heeds God's words in "not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words," will discover for himself or herself what the Lord meant when He said, "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord" (Gen. 2:3; Isa. 58:13, 14).

Surely our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who created the world and gave us His Sabbath as a commemoration, wishes every one who professes His name to honor Him by obeying Him. Surely our Saviour wants consistency in our reasoning concerning His will. And what is His will? That "we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22).

But true Sabbathkeeping is not the observance of some rule or regulation, of some form or tradition. It is, first, sublime fellowship with Divinity, not merely in the sanctuary but in the heart. It is a welcome surcease from the six days of labor. It is a blessed day for physical rest and recuperation, a day sanctified—set apart for a holy use—by the Lord Himself for a complete reviewing of the spiritual life that so many have found must be personally experienced to be truly appreciated.

God showers His bountiful love and care even upon the unjust. But only he who spiritually—not legalistically—calls "the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him," will be able truly to

experience what it means to share with God the sacred hours of His holy Sabbath day.

Consider the following incontrovertible facts:

1. The Sabbath of Creation was made by Christ, who was the Creator, for “without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3).

2. At the close of Creation the seventh-day Sabbath was “blessed” and “sanctified”—set apart for a holy use. Only that which has been *made* holy by God can be *kept* holy.

In the New Testament the seventh-day Sabbath is mentioned no fewer than 59 times. *In not a single instance is it spoken of as having been changed or abolished.* The first day of the week is mentioned eight times, and never once is it identified as God’s holy day, or as the Lord’s day, or as a day to be observed in honor of Christ’s resurrection.

The expression “the Lord’s day” is used only once in the New Testament, in Revelation 1:10, where John says, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.” That day was the seventh-day Sabbath, as we have already shown.

3. Therefore, there is but one valid conclusion to which we may come: If Christ created the seventh-day Sabbath, and blessed and sanctified it—which He did—only He had authority to transfer its holiness to another day. This He did *not* do. If He had done such a thing He would certainly have said so.

We are reminded by Paul in Hebrews that God “spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your

hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his" (chap. 4:4-10).

We have noted the LDS Church's admission that no sure evidence can be found in the Bible that Jesus changed the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week. That is true. Nowhere in the Gospels do we find any command of Christ transferring the Sabbath rest from the seventh day to the first day of the week. Therefore, *after the death of Christ, no person, no institution, no church, possessed authority to change the last will and testament of the Son of God, the Creator and Lord of the Sabbath* which is in His words, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). "For a testament [or will] is of force after men are dead" (Heb. 9:17).

So He said, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (John 15:10).

Did Jesus show us the way by His own example? Very clearly so. "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, *as his custom was he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day*, and stood up for to read." "And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days" (Luke 4:16, 31).

Here, also, is a point of great importance to consider. The Sabbath, as it came from the hand of God at the close of Creation week, and as it stood four thousand years later in the days of Christ and the disciples, was a day marked off by the sun, *not* the midnight hour buried in the bosom of the darkness of night. The Scriptures reveal that the Sabbath began, and ended, at the setting of the sun. "It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, *from even unto even, shall ye celebrate*

your sabbath" (Lev. 23:32). "*And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils*" (Mark 1:32).

The measurement of the day from midnight to midnight is an arrangement devised by the mind of man, not by God.

Is it not clear, then, that the keeping of the first day of the week is based upon the traditions and precepts of men and not upon the commandments of God?

Without question, the authorities of the LDS Church today are deeply sincere in their belief that Sunday, the first day of the week, should be honored as the Sabbath of the Lord, for the members are often admonished to keep the "Sabbath" (Sunday) holy.

The *Deseret News* of April 2, 1977, reported that in his opening address at the 147th Annual General Conference two-day session in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, President Spencer W. Kimball called the LDS Church membership "to honor the Sabbath and keep it holy" and that "the Lord has promised blessings to those who do His will and has gravely warned those who do not." He stated that "the Lord has given a strict commandment to keep the Sabbath, and the church leadership has repeatedly asked the people not to profane the Sabbath."

Have we not come to the time when we should turn our hearts, our wills, and our affections toward God, our Father and Creator, following His way and not our own? Is it not now time to experience for ourselves the blessings the Lord originally placed within the Sabbath hours? These blessings were placed there for all of us. They will lift us closer to Him. They will strengthen us, enlighten us, restore us, and help to purify us, mentally, physically, and spiritually.

If we remove our foot from the Sabbath, our delight will be in the Lord of the Sabbath. It is not just the

calendar day that gives us the blessings, but the inward knowledge that God, our Creator, is there, and that we lovingly consent to accept His invitation to approach Him in worship, in reverence, and in joyful fellowship. May our worship always be of Jesus, "Lord . . . of the sabbath."

Chapter 17

WAS JOSEPH SMITH DECEIVED?

A question uppermost in the minds of many when Mormonism is discussed is this: Was Joseph Smith a true prophet of God? Joseph Fielding Smith makes this unequivocal statement:

“CHURCH STANDS OR FALLS WITH JOSEPH SMITH. Mormonism, as it is called, must *stand or fall on the story of Joseph Smith*. He was either a prophet of God, divinely called, properly appointed and commissioned, or he was one of the biggest frauds this world has ever seen. *There is no middle ground.*”—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 188. (Italics his.)

In examining this concept, let us briefly review the beginnings of Mormonism.

When and where did Mormonism begin? In 1820, in Joseph Smith's fifteenth year, he experienced his first vision. Of this he afterward wrote: “I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*”—*Pearl of Great Price*, Joseph Smith 2:17.

Because of the great religious excitement among the people and religious bodies of his day, young Joseph had decided to “ask of God” (James 1:5) which was the

right church, the one he should join. According to his account, one of the two personages answered that he “must join none of them, for they were all wrong.”—*Ibid.*, Joseph Smith 2:19.

Three years later, on September 21, 1823, according to Joseph Smith, the angel “Moroni” first appeared to him. It was Moroni, he declared, who made known to him the book “written upon gold plates,” which would give “an account of the former inhabitants of this [the American] continent”; also that “the everlasting Gospel was contained in” these golden plates, “as delivered by the Saviour to the ancient inhabitants.” Deposited with the plates, he reported, were “two stones in silver bows . . . fastened to a breastplate,” constituting “the Urim and Thummim,” given for “the purpose of translating the book.”—*Ibid.*, verses 33-35.

Reportedly, after four consecutive annual visits to the west side of the hill Cumorah in the vicinity of Manchester, Ontario County, New York, the angel Moroni delivered the gold plates of the *Book of Mormon* into Joseph Smith’s hands, on September 22, 1827. It is stated that with the aid of the “Urim and Thummim,” Joseph Smith translated the golden plates, and early in 1830, the *Book of Mormon* was printed and published in the English language. Prior to this an angel showed the plates of the Book of Mormon to the “Three Witnesses”—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. Shortly afterward Joseph Smith showed the plates to the “Eight Witnesses.” (See *Essentials in Church History*, 1974, rev. ed., pp. 64-66.)

In previous chapters of this book we have endeavored to present a fair and honest appraisal of the major teachings of Mormonism, comparing each with the Book of all books, the Bible. Generous space has been devoted to statements of LDS belief, and each statement concerning LDS doctrine has come only from authori-

tative Mormon source books. We shall deal with the question raised in this chapter in the same manner.

I wish to make it clear that in no way do I look upon Joseph Smith as a vicious fraud, bent on deceiving the world. However, after a careful investigation of the major beliefs of Mormonism and the story and experiences of Joseph Smith, as written by himself and other authoritative Mormon authors, I have been forced to the conclusion that *he, as a young man, must have failed to take advantage of the protection he could have found in the pages of the Holy Bible, and in the words of Jesus Himself.*

The Saviour's warning concerning false christs, found in Matthew 24:24-27, was intended for Joseph Smith as much as for any other person on earth. "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Isaiah also gave counsel applicable to the end of time: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). Where is "the law and . . . testimony" of God to be found? In God's Book, the Bible.

God's Word of both the Old and the New Testament contains His will and light that leads to life everlasting. The Holy Scriptures provide protection against deception. If 14-year-old Joseph Smith had turned to this Holy Book, he would have read: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). Also: "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were

more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, *and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few*" (Acts 17:10-12). -

Would it not have been well for Joseph Smith to have more carefully heeded the scriptural words that he himself quoted? "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). He states that on the basis of this verse he determined to "ask of God."

But where did Joseph Smith expect to find this wisdom of God? Had he read further in that very same chapter he would have found himself directed to the Book from which he was reading—the Bible. "Wherefore . . . receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (verses 21, 22).

At this point some may question, "Do you think God would allow an innocent boy, 14 years of age, to be deceived?" I answer with the question "What about the East Indian boy of 14, just as sincere and innocent, just as precious in the sight of God, who is deceived by his father's belief in Hinduism? Did God keep him from being deceived? Did God keep Eve from being deceived in the Garden of Eden?"

Joseph Smith tells of having received supernatural visitors. Many people seriously doubt his story of the appearance of the two personages and of the visitations of angels.

What I am about to say next may, on first thought, surprise some. *I do not doubt Joseph Smith's story that he saw two personages* "whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air," nor the visita-

tions of the “angel Moroni” relative to the golden plates. They could well have taken place as described by him.

Joseph Fielding Smith writes of “JOSEPH SMITH’S GREAT HONOR.—There is no account in history or revelation extant, where ever before both the Father and the Son appeared in the presence of mortal man in glory. . . . Joseph Smith, through the power of the Lord, was able to behold the presence of the Great Creator and his Glorified Son, for they deigned to honor him with their presence and converse with him.”—*Essentials in Church History*, 27th edition, 1974, revised, p. 40.

Either those two personages were the heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, or the youth was deceived by Satan, who, according to the Bible, can assume the guise of an angel of light. “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

The question we must therefore consider is not *Did* two personages appear to Joseph Smith? but, Who were they? This question everyone must answer for himself, for “*there is no middle ground.*”—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 188.

Because Mormonism officially declares that “there is no middle ground” the obvious conclusion would be that they believe there is no salvation today without accepting Joseph Smith. And this is precisely what they teach.

“NO SALVATION WITHOUT ACCEPTING JOSEPH SMITH. If Joseph Smith was verily a prophet, and if he told the truth when he said that he stood in the presence of angels sent from the Lord, and obtained keys of authority, and the commandment to organize the Church

of Jesus Christ once again on the earth, then this knowledge is of the most vital importance to the entire world. *No man can reject that testimony without incurring the most dreadful consequences, for he cannot enter the kingdom of God. It is, therefore, the duty of every man to investigate that he may weigh this matter carefully and know the truth.*”—*Ibid.*, p. 189.

How true is that last sentence! And therefore is it not also true that *no one should accept Mormonism without a thorough investigation of its declared teachings?* And, should not one who is already a Mormon make a prayerful comparison of his or her church's teachings with those of the Holy Bible? For if the LDS doctrines are not the truth of God, that person could be eternally lost by clinging to them.

Doubtless, though, many believers in Mormonism have never considered the possibility that Joseph Smith may have been deceived. But did not the Lord Himself warn Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden not to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil “in the midst of the garden”? They were not to eat of it, “lest ye die” (Gen. 3:3). But even after hearing the warning spoken directly from the lips of the Lord, Eve was deceived. Is it not possible, then, that if young Joseph Smith failed to carefully search the written Word of God and to heed its warnings he, too, could fall under deception?

Most students of Scripture understand that two kinds of angels are mentioned in the Bible—holy angels and evil angels. Of the first class, Paul writes, “But to which of the angels said he [God] at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb. 1:13, 14). We read elsewhere that “there was war in heaven: Michael [Christ] and *his angels* fought against

the dragon; and the dragon fought and *his angels*, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12:7-9).

Paul admonishes all believers in Christ to "put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [R.S.V., "spiritual hosts of wickedness"] in high places" (Eph. 6:11, 12). In this world of spiritual confusion, every believer in Christ who sincerely desires to know God's truth must "try the spirits." John warns, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

Was not the Bible given us to enable us to find divine direction as to what to accept as truth, and what to avoid as error?

In the Saviour's foreknowledge of what would be in the Christian era, He warned that many would come claiming to be "Christs" and "prophets" of God, and cautioned us, that we might not be deceived by them.

Joseph Smith had access to the Scriptures, which would have given him divine instruction regarding what was truth and what was error. With his youthful, inquiring mind he could have "known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:15, 16).

The King James Version of the Bible *gave the same*

instruction and counsel in 1820 as it does today. Mormonism's chief authority on doctrine has declared this to be "*the best version.*" (See *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, p. 191.)

Carefully note these words of Joseph Smith: "I reflected on it [James 1:5] again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God I did; for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in *settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.*"—*Essentials in Church History*, 27th edition, 1974, pp. 37, 38. (Italics supplied.) This could have been Joseph Smith's fatal mistake. For the Lord invites us to come to Him through Christ and the Word. (See Eph. 2:18; John 5:39; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17). "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isa. 1:18). This is God's way to His truth and to life everlasting.

But here one might ask, Did the "Three Witnesses," and the "Eight Witnesses," who testified that they had seen the "plates" from which the *Book of Mormon* was translated, actually look upon them? Again, I do not doubt that these men did see the "plates" with their own eyes. Here is the account given concerning the "Three Witnesses":

"Their testimony is that they received a visitation of an angel from the presence of the Lord, who laid before them the golden record from whence the *Book of Mormon* was translated, and who also instructed them. They beheld the engravings upon the plates as the leaves were turned one by one before them, and the voice of God was heard by them declaring from the heavens that the translation was by the gift and power of God and commanding them to bear record of it to all the world. These three witnesses, through adversity, persecution,

and all vicissitudes of life, always remained true to their testimony that they beheld the plates in the presence of an angel and heard the voice of God speaking to them from the heavens.”—*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, p. 230.

There is no reason to doubt that the witnesses “always remained true to their testimony that they beheld the plates,” that they had *seen* them, that they had *seen* “an angel,” that they had heard a “voice.” They surely felt that they could not deny their own senses. But what is extremely important is the question, Was that “golden record” that was “laid before them” *from God*? Was that “angel” one of *God’s holy angels*? Was the “voice” they heard “speaking to them from the heavens” truly God’s voice? *These* are the questions that must be settled. And the *only Book in the world that can answer, and that has the authority to answer*, is the Bible. And no one should risk his eternal salvation on less than a full and honest investigation, based on the Bible, into these important questions.

In this book we have pursued Mormonism’s claim of possessing the truth of God for today’s world. And in the light of what we have been considering in this final chapter—and all preceding chapters as we have inquired into the varied teachings of the LDS Church—we should read the following paragraph from the pen of Apostle Orson Pratt:

“If the Latter-day Saints are not what they profess to be, one thing is certain, that no one ever will be able to confute their doctrine by the scriptures; however, [sic] imperfect the people may be, their doctrine is *infallible*. Can this be said of any other people who have existed on the eastern hemisphere during the last 1700 years? No. Their doctrines have been a heterogenous mixture of truth and error, that would not stand the test one moment when measured by a pattern of inspiration; some disparity could be seen and pointed out—some

deviation either in the organization or in the ordinances of the gospel could be shown to exist. And now after so many centuries have elapsed, and when human wisdom has been exerted to its utmost strength, and the most exalted and gigantic talents displayed to lay a stable foundation whereon to build, we awake and behold all an empty bubble—a vain show—a phantom of man's creation, with scarcely a vestige of the ancient *form*, to say nothing of the *power*. In the midst of all this thick darkness, a young, illiterate, obscure and inexperienced man announces a message from heaven, before which darkness flees away; human dogmas are overturned; the traditions of ages are uprooted; all forms of church government tremble like an aspen leaf at its approach, and the mighty fabric of popular sectarianism is convulsed and shaken to its very foundation. How happens all this? If Joseph Smith were an impostor, whence his superior wisdom? What power inspired his mind in laying the foundation of a church according to the ancient order? How could an impostor so far surpass the combined wisdom of seventeen centuries as to originate a system diverse from every other system under heaven, and yet harmonize with the system of Jesus and His apostles in every particular? What! an impostor discover the gross darkness of ages, and publish a doctrine perfect in every respect, against which not one scriptural argument can be adduced! The idea is preposterous! The *purity* and *infallibility* of the doctrine of this great modern prophet is a presumptive evidence of no small moment in favor of his divine mission.”—*Orson Pratt's Works*, pp. 4, 5.

We acknowledge that there are many evidences of a “superior wisdom,” even a display of supernatural intelligence, in Joseph Smith's system of theology. But are we to acknowledge it as a revelation from God? The answer to this question must be decided by the reader.

And it ought to be done on the testimony of the Bible. No one should try to make another's decision on questions of such vital importance when his *eternal salvation* is at stake. Individual reason and conscience should not be blindly placed on the altar of another man's declarations or testimony. Is it not "the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel . . . which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go" (Isa. 48:17)? Is not this the more certain and safer way?

Now, if Joseph Smith was deceived, so also were his followers. And among those followers were two of my own great-grandfathers, Heber C. Kimball and Orson Pratt—two of the original twelve apostles of the LDS Church. These men were either greatly honored and called of God when they were set apart, in 1835, as apostles by the Three Witnesses of the *Book of Mormon* or they were men tragically deceived when they accepted Joseph Smith as a latter-day prophet of God.

One question I have been asked is "Do you think you know more than your great-grandfathers?" My response is that I do know that each of them will have to answer to the great Judge of the universe for their use of the knowledge and opportunities God granted them while they were living, and I too shall be judged at the same bar. So also will you, dear reader, and so will all others, whether they read or not. But more wonderful than all is the knowledge that everyone reading this book still has the priceless opportunity to decide for Christ and His Holy Word. Such a decision can be made only under the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God knows the one and only way to life everlasting, and He speaks for Jesus, who is "the way, the truth, and the life": and, in Jesus' own words, "*no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6).

If you have prayerfully and thoughtfully read the chapters of this book, then you have had the opportu-

nity to understand for yourself most of the fundamental doctrines that make Mormonism what it is. You have seen the great searchlight of God's Book turned upon each of the church's teachings. That penetrating light has detected error wherever it has been found. All this has been written for one purpose, to reveal to many people—each one of whom is more precious to God than all the wealth of the world—the incomprehensible love of our heavenly Father, and His saving truth which can change erring men and women into dedicated followers of His matchless Son.

Everything I have written in this volume has been penned with a love in my heart for all in my family who remain in the Mormon faith, and for church leaders and members of the church. I have no desire to hurt or embarrass anyone.

My decision to accept the Bible as the ultimate test of all religious doctrine and experience came through a diligent and prayerful study of its pages. To break away from my former church required a difficult decision. But Jesus' words to Peter brought courage and strength: "Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (Luke 18:28-30).

Rich are the promises of the Lord to you, to me, to everyone who will accept them—promises of His grace in the forgiveness of, and cleansing from, all sin; promises of renewal through Christ after the likeness of the divine character; promises of power for living in this present world; of transformation and complete redemption at Christ's coming; and of final glorification with all the people of God, to live forever in this earth

after it has been restored by the creative power of Him who shall make “a new heaven and a new earth.” (See Titus 3:5-7; Eph. 1:7; 1 John 1:7, 9; Col. 3:10; 1:10, 11; Phil. 3:20, 21; 1 John 3:1-3; Rom. 8:17; Rev. 21:1-7.)

O to live where God is! What will it be to enter the home of the saved? What can be compared to it? There our highest aspirations shall be achieved, our deepest yearnings satisfied; there the widest knowledge may be attained in every field of learning, along with the truest wisdom. The purest fellowship will be yours and mine. Nothing shall mar. None will disappoint or misunderstand us. No darkness or fear shall be found there; no suspicion shall be aroused against us. Only peace and harmony will dwell there, for we read, “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it” (Rev. 21:23-26).

May God help us to open our hearts and our minds to receive everything He has for us. We cannot earn the salvation He offers us. It is a free gift through Christ Jesus our Lord. For this purpose Jesus came into the world. And because He came, lived, died, and rose again, He—and He alone—is our Saviour!

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